

Scrap.



Mrs. Wadselle.





Sincerely yours,
C. A. C. Badger.

Scraps;

New and Old.

BY

MRS. C. A. C. HADSELLE.

PITTSFIELD, MASS.
PRESS OF THE SUN PRINTING COMPANY
1900

Contents.

UNCLE MOSES' STRATAGEM	1
COME TO ME IN DREAMS AND KISS ME.....	46
POOR WOOD.....	47
TO BLANCHE.....	66
TO TACONIC.....	66
THE UNSPOKEN WARNING.....	67
AMPHIBIOUS FREDDY	77
TO A LITTLE SINGING BIRD.....	90
NED.....	91
MUTUAL BLINDNESS.....	100
A SKETCH FROM LIFE.....	101
TO C——.....	110
UNITED AFTER MANY YEARS.....	111
WITH A CARVING SET.	118
FREDDIE'S FEAT.....	119
THE STATE OF VOLUNTOWN.....	129
AN INTERPOLATION TO WILL CARLETON'S FAMOUS POEM.....	137

Errata.

Page 46. Second stanza—
Yet in the silence I'll remember.

Page 66. Second stanza—
God keep what he has made so fair.

Page 90. Second Stanza—
Nor come one note, afar *or* soon,

Page 24. Make last line finish next page.

Page 37. Unless you divide 'bout even.

Scraps;

NEW AND OLD ;

Gathered here and there, and dating back, some of them, to the early sixties. Not quite *folk-lore*, but approaching it. Their production then served to shorten many years of invalidism—incidentally oiling the wheels of the household machinery ;—if, now, they shall help you, reader, to pass an idle hour more pleasantly, their purpose will have been fully served.

Save the first, which had only a foundation in truth, all the prose numbers are mere narratives of facts—proper names excepted—gained either by experience or observation. That is a sufficient excuse for reprinting them—being “truths” they had to “rise again.”

“‘The Mother’s Warning’ was copied from Maine to California,” said Mr. Samuel Bowles, and he had many letters asking if it was authentic. To these he answered confidently, yes. Properly attested, it later found its way through Mr. Richard Hodgson, to the English Journal for Psychical Research, May, 1891.

Of lesser moment, in effects at least, was a later instance of what psychologists term “Motor impulse,” from the same pages and not before chronicled.

“Of the making of books” we are assured “there is no end,” and having, since three years of age, fed bountifully at a table spread by others, it was natural, at the last, to want to contribute my mite to the entertainment. Once only, since the inception of this plan, has my purpose weakened ; it was this way : as the wee child, overbold in its explorations, pauses when nurse says in sepulchral

tones, "Bea-a-rs!" so I faltered when a timorous friend whispered, "Critics." But, remembering that these brain babies of mine—they were babies then—had "passed muster" with such minds as had Dr. Holland, Sarah J. Hale, and others of that ilk, I breathed again. Besides they—the critics—may rightly consider my little book beneath their notice, so shall I, possibly, survive to edit another. Till then I am, to every kindly reader,

Sincerely your friend,

CELIA ANTOINETTE CHAPMAN-HADSELLE.

Uncle Moses' Stratagem.

“**H**IGH-HO! What did Providence ever plant me here for? Of all places in the world, any but this. Poor and proud, with scarcely practice enough to enable me to meet my board and laundry bills, and then to go and cut such a caper as this. The girl is an angel—no mistake about that; but unfortunately not one of the sort to thrive on ambrosia, and that’s about all I could hope to offer in my present circumstances. Oh, dear! why don’t something ever turn up outside of dreams and those confounded magazine stories? I never’ll read another. I ran over one last night, and actually before morning Uncle Moses had died bequeathing me a thousand dollars, and Milly and I were living in that little cream-colored cottage on Brooklyn Street where that poor fellow died yesterday; and then to wake up and find myself alone, on a cot in this dingy office, with only a strong smell of ‘fetty’ in lieu of the aroma of pinks and honeysuckles with which my olfactories were regaled in dreamland—it was too bad.

“I feel guilty that such a suggestion should

have come to me even in my dreams, and I know I don't want these things, desirable as they are, at that price, for Aunt Hannah thinks to this day that he is a rival Adonis, and he'll never see seventy again. Well, I suppose that's just as it should be; so I'll go and perform that ugly operation, and then I *will* forget that such a girl as Milly Armstrong ever crossed my path. At all events, there's no romance about my falling in love, and I always meant there should be, just a little. Half past two, and three was the hour. Where's my case? Oh, yes, and a clean collar—the very last one, by Jo! Crimpy, if the squire can spare you half an hour, sweep the office while I am out, and if anybody calls, say I'm round on Orchard Street and will be back in an hour. Here, take this, and mind you don't meddle with anything, now; there is something in every one of these bottles, and you'll get blown up if you touch 'em. You understand?"

"Yis, sah, guess I don't," grinned the darky, without lifting his eyes from the five-cent note in his smutty fingers.

Let us follow the doctor round to Orchard Street; or, perhaps, we'd better precede him a little, and learn something of the girl who, in his exceedingly matter-of-fact soliloquy, he confesses

to have fallen in love with. She is lying on a lounge, dressed in a loose wrapper, her dark, heavy hair put up in a stout net, and her eyes swollen with sleeplessness and suffering; while about the mouth rests an expression as if every nerve was braced to silent endurance.

Certainly there was nothing about her which could have warranted any young man possessed of a particle of romance in calling her an angel or falling in love with her; nor was it any marvel that our young doctor should have come to the conclusion, as he did on his very first visit, that advantage had been taken of a recent insertion in his advertisement in the columns of the *Mirror*—"No charges made to those unable to pay." There was no evidence of extreme poverty about the room or house; on the contrary it had an air of comfort; but that a system of rigid economy was in daily enforcement was unmistakable, and from this, and the fact that he had once seen old Doctor Allen's sorrel hitched to a post at the roadside, he gathered that he had been called to save paying fees to the established physician.

"Never mind," was his comforting reflection; "it is a case that doesn't require much medicine, and I may as well spend my time there as doing

nothing; besides, who knows but it may be the means of introducing me to a handsome bit of practice elsewhere?"

"There he comes!" exclaimed Milly's sister, a splendid young creature, in whose complexion the red and white mingled, till, in watching, one could think of nothing but blush rose-leaves scattered on a snow drift. "I shall not stay, Milly, indeed I shall not."

"Rosa, once and for all, don't be foolish. You know there is no one else to stand by me, and now at the last moment for you to desert me. I would not do so by you. Think of all I have gone through in the past three weeks, and you will know that I am not very strong; do not try me by any further exhibition of your own weakness."

The doctor entered, and, after pleasant greetings with both and a few professional inquiries of Milly, proceeded with a gentle hand to fold back the wrapper from her shoulder; and when yet other folds had been removed the cause of her sufferings came to view. A large swelling lay like a halved apple on the smooth surface, and Milly had that morning insisted that before another sunset the lancet should bring her some hope of relief, and the promise of an hour's re-

pose—something she had not enjoyed for many days and nights, notwithstanding the powerful opiates administered.

A stouter heart than Rosa's might have shrunk under the circumstances, and she, at the first movement, put both hands to her face with a spasmodic pressure, as one strives to shut out the presence of a grim spectre; but alas! she had no other two hands with which to close her ears, and at the ominous click of the opening case she dropped on her knees, and laying her own to her sister's face, sobbed out, "Let me go, Milly? oh, let me go! I cannot"—

"Rosa, my poor, weak Rosa," said Milly, pressing the tearful face close to her bosom, "hark a minute. Tell me who wanted a few weeks back to go to the hospital and nurse sick and wounded soldiers; to stand by and see limbs taken off, bullet paths probed, and gaping sabre cuts quivering under the surgeon's needle? And now"—

"Don't, don't! that was different. They are not *you*; besides, I would never see these things done, only take care of them afterward. Dear Milly, put this off till to-morrow, do."

"And so darling, to save your present feelings, you would condemn me to hours of pain that in the aggregate would exceed an hundred-fold this

momentary one. Is that kind? You do not mean it. Come, now, be brave and good. See, the doctor is waiting," and she put the face gently away from her. But the half-fainting girl only cowered lower in the cushions, and Milly, despairing of being able to bring her to any show of courage beyond this, motioned the doctor to proceed.

But somehow the delay had been dangerous to him. An unusual paleness about the mouth and a humid look in the dark eye, as it turned now and then on the sufferer, betokened a sympathy beyond what mere professional interest would warrant, and the extreme deliberation with which he made his arrangements, and the slight tremulousness perceptible through all, looked as if, in his heart, he would fain have pleaded with Milly for a postponement. But this might have affected his reputation, and who ever saw a doctor, old or young, in love or out, with whom this was not a first consideration? Besides, he knew it was the best thing to be done, and when there was no longer any possible excuse for delay, he said:—

"Miss Armstrong, owing to recent severe suffering you are stronger in mind than in body; shall I put a little ether on this sponge?"

"No, thank you," answered Milly, smiling, "give it to Rosa, please;" and she laid a hand

caressingly on the golden braids. With a half suppressed shriek Rosa darted from the room; the smile faded from Milly's face instantly, and she closed her eyes, saying only, "Be quick."

The doctor was right; she was stronger mentally than physically. A moment later and her face bore the semblance of death. The exhausted system refused to rally readily, and as he bent over her with restoratives, visions of heart disease or other causes which might have produced a permanent instead of temporary suspension of vitality, passed rapidly before him. He knelt before her regarding anxiously the waxen features, then forgetting all else save the promptings of his own fast-beating heart, for a brief instant his lips touched hers. "Milly, dear Milly," he murmured, and again and again, as if these had power to restore consciousness, hasty kisses were pressed on brow, cheek, and lips. A trembling sigh, a faint flush, and Milly's eyes slowly opened on the pale face before her. There was no need of words. In that glance each read the heart of the other.

Strange, but these momentary communings often reveal more of the inner life than years of ordinary acquaintance can do. There is a sudden rending of the veil, and the heart, with its measureless depths of love and sympathy, lies exposed

like a limpid spring before a thirsty wanderer, when with a quick movement the encumbering leaves are whisked from its surface. Oh, drink, then, weary, way-worn one, wherever you are, drink, and thank God for it! Not at every turn of life's highway comes there such a pool as this. Quaff, satisfy your hungry soul. It was meant for you. God planted sympathy in some hearts as he planted springs on some hill-tops, knowing well that one day a parched and weary traveller should pass that way, and go on with such songs of thanksgiving on his lips as were never conceived of by the dweller in the valley, at whose very door flows a never-failing fountain. Drink, then, though withered-souled, weazen-faced beings, who cannot know thirst, *do* question your right or marvel at your need. Drink, and know that they in whose lives blessings jostle for room, whose nectared goblet is forever brimming over, must never hope to have half the satisfaction the starving feel in having these soul needs supplied.

Doubtless Dr. Wilson would some time have told Milly Armstrong of his great love for her, but it would have been long before she could have realized all its length, and breadth, and depth, as seen in this joyful revelation. Now, with an involuntary movement she laid her limp hand on

his, and the lids again drooped slowly, while a happy, satisfied look crept over her wan features. Another kiss sealed this wordless covenant, bringing the crimson tide to neck and temples, and, a moment after, when Rosa slowly opened the door she found the doctor busy with lint and bandages.

"Come in, little coward," said he, carelessly, as if the principal event of his life, between the cradle and the grave, had not transpired in that room within the last ten minutes. "When do you go to the hospitals? I propose," he continued, volubly, partly to cover his own confusion, but more to disarm any suspicion of hers, "I propose to furnish you some simple medicines with instructions for their use. You will find them of incalculable benefit in your vocation, since surgeons are not always at hand when wanted, and valuable lives are placed at the disposal of skilful or ignorant nurses, as the case may be. You should know how to bleed a person when stunned by a cannon ball, to take up an artery and hold it till help arrives, and"—

"In case of fainting, doctor," retorted Rosa, vexed to boldness by this raillery, and glancing at the flushed face on the pillow "what do you do for that?"

"Depends on circumstances, Miss Rosa, alto-

gether on circumstances," was the rejoinder, as he turned his handsome, laughing face full upon her.

"I should think so. Let me know if I am wanted;" and despite Milly's pleading look, Rosa shut the door between herself and them, and was half way down the garden walk before she ventured to think or even to look around her.

What a discovery had this been to her. When she fled the room a few moments before, it was only to drop down outside the door, where she sat listening for the renewal of conversation within, intending then to re-enter; but when, instead, she heard the doctor's faint words and fainter kisses, a bolt of conviction shot through her heart, and like a flash came a recollection of the blushes and reserve on her sister's part, and the illy-concealed confusion on his, which had marked these later visits. With a new sense of loss and desertion, which all may understand, she had crept half way to her chamber, when suddenly a remembrance that as yet she had heard no single tone of Milly's aroused her fears, and she retraced her steps. But, as we have seen, it was only to find her first suspicions a certainty. Now, when again alone, she said, bitterly, to herself: "Just what I might have expected, and I have the delightful alterna-

tive of becoming a dependent sister-in-law, or going out into the world entirely unprotected. The first I will never do, though Milly is the best sister in the world ; so I'll just go back to Fayette and keep the district school in the summer time, and work in Mr. Bardwell's shop in the winter. Splendid prospects, certainly !" For the next half hour poor Rosa's cogitations were not of a nature to excite the envy of any of her sex.

CHAPTER II.

Milly and Rosa Armstrong were orphans. Their father had been one of those who regard education as above any other acquired good, and had, by means of industry and close management, given these, his only children, excellent advantages for obtaining it. Just at the time when they might have repaid in part the toil and care bestowed on them, by taking the position of teachers in the school where they had so long been pupils, he was seized with the "western fever," and emigrated with his family to those distant wilds. Four years of real work in-door and out, had given to their rude home an appearance of comfort and civilization ; and when a dozen clean-faced children from the settlement gathered in one of the

rooms for instruction, Milly saw opening before her a path of usefulness, and she grew happy and strong in the resolution to walk therein.

One of her most magnificent air-castles was in the shape of a seminary, on a knoll a little to the south of the house, over which, a few years later she and Rosa should preside, lifting their beloved parents above all need of manual labor, and themselves to the highest place in the respect and affection of the kind-hearted people by whom they were surrounded. A little sum was already laid by towards the accomplishment of this project, when the "Indian troubles" broke out, and Mr. Armstrong, while defending a fort on the outskirts, was among the first victims of those terrible massacres.

The shock was too much for the feeble mother, and in a week the girls had marked the rude grave where she lay, divided their household goods among their needy neighbors, and started alone for the far Eastern States, where a childless sister of their mother was living in tolerable affluence. They were crushed and broken with sorrow, but their pride revolted at this application to one they had never seen for assistance, and they would have sought elsewhere for the means

of support; but this had been their mother's dying injunction, and could not be disregarded.

Their aunt and uncle received them kindly—nay, more, affectionately—deeply commiserating their orphaned, destitute condition, and admiring intensely the character of Milly, whose heroic struggles under her own trials, and efforts to sustain the sinking Rosa were deemed unparalleled.

But these old people had lived too long alone to brook any innovation on their time-worn habits, and after the girls had enjoyed a few months of rest and quiet, the old gentleman laid before them a plan of his own conception. It met their fullest approval, and in a week's time they were located in a small house in the thriving village of W——, Milly installed as teacher in one of the public schools, and Rosa assuming the light household duties, with the occasional assistance of a stout woman living next door. The care of their not plethoric wardrobe and some “finishing” from the shirt rooms near, filled up the interstices, so that there was little danger of *ennui*, and the old fellow, who it is said finds employment for idle hands, must have turned in despair from a contemplation of their cosy sitting-room in the after-school hours.

But they were not driven to be thus industrious,

for the kind uncle had said, in parting : “ Now, remember, gals, you ’re to write to me and yer a’nt every week, and tell everything how yer gittin’ on. When that family gits moved into the other part of the house you won’t be afraid to stay o’ nights ; an’ here—yes gi’ve me a slip of paper—I want to put down the place you ’re to do yer tradin’ at. There ’tis—Ingalls—Frank Ingalls. He was the only one that kep’ groc’ries along with dry goods, and I thought ’twould be lots handier to git ’em all to one place. Save yer runnin’ round, ye know, if it should happen to rain or anything. And so that ye needn’t hev any feelin’s about gittin’ things charged, I’ll tell ye how ’tis. He’s an old acquaintance of mine, and when he sot up in bizness, four or five year ago, I let him hev a thousand without interest till sech time as he could pay it back without embarrassin’ himself. When I spoke about your tradin’ some on account, he was right tickled, and sed how yer should have things cheaper than cash customers. His father and I was brought up together, and I loved him like a brother. He was deacon of the church up in the ‘Holler’ more ’n twenty year, and, as this is a chip of the old block, you needn’t be afeared but what he ’ll be as honest as the day is long.

"But don't let Rosa go there much," he added, chucking that young lady under the chin, with a fond smile, "he might fall in love with her pretty face."

Rosa pouted, and Milly said that neither of them was likely to give much thought to things of that sort very soon, for they were in no hurry to be separated.

"Well, that's right; you are to hang to one another. It's nateral; and more so, I s'pose, coz you 're left alone so, nobody to"—the old man stopped and whistled the "Bower of Prayer" slowly for a minute or two, and no one but his wife, who knew his habit, would have guessed that it was only to cover the tremulousness of the lips and the moisture of the eye, for he, like most men, thought it weak and unmanly to suffer any sign of those purest emotions, pity and sympathy, to come to the surface. Then he went on, "I have made some *inquiries* about the meetings here, and as they 're all good and hev got good ministers, you may go where you 're a mind to. But they do say they hev got the finest organ in the 'Piscopal church, and as Rosa, here, kin warble like a bird, I thought may be she'd like to go and jine the quire. 'Twas Ingalls a-tellin' me about it, and I jest hinted, kinder round about,

you know, that one of the gals could sing like a martingale, an' he said: 'Then, by all means, she must come with us, the soprano needs another strong voice to bring it up to the other parts,' an' I told him he could speak to you about it the first time you came into the store; I'd no doubt you'd be tickled to death to do it."

"O uncle," pleaded Rosa, and the snow and rose-leaves changed to peonies, "how could you? But he shall never get the chance to ask me, for"—A stern look from Milly caused her to leave the sentence unfinished in word, but she carried it out in deed. No necessity, however urgent, could make her enter Mr. Ingall's store afterward. If Milly forgot anything in her Saturday's purchases they went without another week.

"No doubt, uncle, we shall get on finely," said Milly, soothingly, for she saw the old man was hurt by Rosa's words, "and we will go to the Episcopal meeting too; I always liked the service, and besides it was my mother's faith."

"You're a good gal; your feathers don't ruffle as easy as some," and he glanced at the still panting Rosa. "One thing more, and I am done. Ef you should happen to be ailin', either of you—and we're all li'ble to be—and want to call a doctor, you'd better send for the young one."

Ingalls says the other has got to be old and kinder superanimated—aint thought near as much of as he was when he was younger. Well, that's what we've got to make up our minds to, all on us, sooner or later—*bein' crowded out*. But I declare I never knew the time to pass away so fast. It'll take old 'Bill' and me five good hours to get hum, and I'll have to walk every step up the mountain, at that. Now, take good care of yourselves, and let us know ef yer sick, and write every week, and—well, I guess when fall apples is ripe me and yer a'nt 'll come down and fetch yer some to dry. Good-by. Good-by, Rosa; don't hold nothing agin yer old uncle; he meant well enough—hadn't any ide of hurtin your feelings."

"I know it, uncle; forgive me," said the girl, sobbing; and throwing a pair of snow white arms about his neck, she laid her soft cheek to his wrinkled one. "You are our best friend, and so good. Will you forgive me?" The "Bower of Prayer" floated back for answer, and Uncle Barnard and old "Bill" were soon lost around the corner.

And here, reader, in this same little brown house you and I found these girls six months later. Doctor Wilson made their acquaintance a little earlier, having been called to attend

Milly through a slow fever, terminating as we have seen. At his first visit he had said to himself: "What a mind that girl has got; it shines through every feature. None of your namby-pamby stuff there. Imagine *her* fainting at sight of saw or bone-splint; yet she has a sweet, low voice, and eyes soft as"—Pshaw, doctor, *that's* nonsense. Milly's eyes are grizzly gray, nothing more, and no rhapsodies of yours can make them otherwise. Yet at each successive visit, some new trait challenges his respect and admiration.

Her cheerfulness and fortitude under suffering, her motherly tenderness and love for Rosa, and, more than all, the ease and grace with which she met and conversed with him, seeming to ignore the fact (undisputed in his own mind) that she was a charity patient, exhibited a degree of self-training rarely found.

Of course he never dreamed of being in any danger, or of analyzing his feelings in the least, till one day alone in his office, he found himself regretting that soon there would be no farther call for his services around on Orchard Street. Even then he persuaded himself that this was only the pleasure which every intelligent person feels in coming in contact with one of equal or superior attainments, especially if there be added a

congeniality of tastes and feelings; so he resolved to make the most of the few remaining visits, lengthening them to triple their need.

"You will be very glad to know," Milly had said, on the morning of our hero's opening soliloquy, "that after to-day you will have no farther need to trouble yourself in coming here. I am ever so much better, and then an aunt of mine is coming soon to stay a week or two and nurse me back to health." This was said in a voice meant to be very firm, but was nevertheless exceedingly faltering. Receiving no answer, with another spasmodic effort she added: "So if you will bring in your bill this afternoon, I shall be greatly obliged."

"I—I—that is, I have made no—I thought—yes—yes certainly, I shall be most happy to do so. "Good afternoon," stammered Dr. Wilson, as he left the house, choking with—"conflicting emotions" some would have it, I should say shame and confusion, such as the veriest school-boy might have felt when conscious that he was red and awkward, and stuttering. "Good-afternoon," indeed! with his shadow lying fully five feet to the westward. Love metamorphoses every body, and our usually self-possessed Doctor Wilson was no exception.

“I believe I came very near telling her that I had thought her a charity patient. A pretty mess that would have been truly. She *ought* to be one, I am convinced of that ; but it would never do to mention is. I suppose it’s the old story of ‘pride and poverty.’ Only one more visit ! Well, that’s best, for if this thing had gone on much longer, I should have got too deeply entangled to have escaped heart whole ; though, as to that, I had rather have Milly Armstrong to-day, with all her poverty, than any of these shallow misses in whose every action is manifest the determination to catch the doctor. But I mustn’t think of marrying anybody, at present. O, Uncle Moses, if you only knew how much more good a little of your hoarded gold would do me now than a few years hence, when I shall have gained for myself a comfortable competency, but”—

Yes, “but,” Doctor Wilson, and with all your “buts,” before that one “visit” was ended Milly Armstrong was your plighted wife ; and you were proud and happy, notwithstanding your poverty and hers. Your hopes had never been so bright as on this particular hour ; your prospects of a large and constantly increasing practice never so certain before ; and there was no sham in the

earnestness with which you entreated Milly to name an early day.

Matter-of-fact in love-making, as in everything else, he had settled things in his own peremptory, off-hand fashion. Milly, he persisted, had already injured her health by confinement in the school-room, entering, as she did, into the vocation body and soul, and would hear no word of her return to it. Then he urged, with some show of truth, that they could find room for one more in their humble home; and that what he was now paying for board, etc., would furnish the table for three abundantly. Finally, that a month would afford ample time for every preparation, and, under the circumstances, would be much more sensible than a longer betrothal.

Milly would have demurred at this seeming needless haste, but the doctor had promised that she and Rosa should not be separated till such time as the latter should find a home of her own in some kindly heart; and remembering that they would thus escape the unavoidable gossip which always attends these prolonged courtships, gave a blushing consent. Whether as a reward of this unhopd-for magnanimity on her part, or to give expression to a gratitude to which mere

words might prove inadequate,—well, the lovers parted in the usual way.

Rosa, who had pouted her fill in the last hour, and not doubting but that the doctor had left long since, parted the jasmine vine over the open window in time to be an observer of the lengthened kiss ; and finding a retreat without discovery im- possible, said, saucily : “That’s a queer prescription.”

“It has the advantage over some,” retorted the doctor, gayly ; it costs nothing, and is not bad to take ;” and he glanced at Milly’s half - hidden, crimson face for a proof. “But come in here, sister mine, and ratify the covenant into which I have entered, of being brotherly guardian over the fate and fortunes of one Rosa Armstrong, until such time as, with her approval, I may transfer my trust to worthier hands.”

“Thank you, I shall be my own gnardian, sir, and will not trouble you with the care of so perverse and wilful a being,” was the answer, half playful, half serious.

“Oh, I forgot ; you are off to the hospital, doubtless ?”

“Perhaps, and you ought to be, or to an asylum for the insane. Really, you should be prosecuted for malpractice in getting a patient into such a state of excitement. See !”

Sure enough! Milly, weakened by sickness and the late scene through which she had passed, on hearing her sister's changed voice and half bitter words, remembered all at once that what was her great happiness was another's great pain, and the tears were trickling silently through her thin fingers.

Now, the doctor was skilled in pharmacopœia—had passed the board of examination without even a puzzled look on his countenance, but for a woman in tears with a third person present, he knew no remedy. So he only laid his hand tenderly on Milly's soft, dark hair, saying, in a subdued tone, "Forgive me, darling; I have indeed been wrong. I will be more mindful in the future. Rosa, *you* can soothe her; try. Good night. I will call again to-morrow."

CHAPTER III.

Uncle Barnard sung a whole verse of the "Bower of Prayer," when he read Rosa's letter containing an account of Milly's continued illness, tinged, as it was, all through, with her own tired, blue, discouraged feelings. She was certain Milly was going into a decline, and wanted aunty to come and stay a week or so, ostensibly to aid and

comfort the invalid, but plainly enough it was herself who needed aid and comfort as much. Finally, would Uncle Barnard lend them twenty or twenty-five dollars with which to meet the doctor's bill, until such time as Milly's school money became due, etc., etc.

But when he came to the postscript on a separate bit of paper, written on the evening of the day whose events were recorded in the last chapter, and while Milly was wrapped in her first, quiet, happy slumber, he changed his tune, rubbing his hands, and laughing immoderately. It ran in this wise :—

“Milly is better physically, but I think has lost her senses irrecoverably. She has promised to marry that Doctor Wilson whom you recommended us to call should we need a physician's services. Alas ! dear uncle, how little you thought of such a result as this ! He is as poor as a church mouse, and it must certainly be considered a disinterested match on both sides, as far as this world's goods are concerned. I think, aunt, you had better not come down this week, as I requested, so many long rides will be too much for you, and Milly wants you to be here four weeks from to-night to attend her wedding. There will and I know that I ought to have waited and asked

be no one else invited, I believe, except some old relations of the doctor's—doubtless some worthless or miserly wretches, else they would never have suffered him to begin life in this shabby way, footing it around miles among his patients, wearing the same old suit to meeting that has done service through the week, and none too well brushed at that. I find myself wondering at this moment if he will be able to muster a new one for the coming occasion. It *was* a pretty good joke, though, his losing his heart, as he confesses he did, while he supposed her a charity patient. I would have him know that we are not quite so bad off as that, yet; though, as things have turned out, you needn't send the money.

“And now, uncle, I want you to do me a little kindness. Will you please call at Mr. Bardwell's shop and see if he wants another hand this coming winter? You know I have worked some on thick cloth, and if I can board in his family, will make no trouble about wages. Do not forget this; I am anxious to know.”

“Dear uncle,” wrote Milly, three weeks later, “are you angry with me for what I have done, that you do not send me a single line in reference to the matter? Be assured I want your approval,

it; but everything came so suddenly, that there was no time to think. I am certain you will forgive me when you come to see him and know him as I—as he deserves to be. Will you wait and judge him then?

“There has been, all along, but one thing to mar my perfect happiness, and that was a saddened look on dear Rosa’s face; but even that is vanished now, and as the story is a short one, I will tell it you in a few words, for there will be so much to do and say when you come.

“In the early part of my illness, Rosa could not be induced to leave me long enough to obtain things needed for our comfort; so a list of articles desired was sent to your friend, Mr. Ingalls, and promptly came the package through the hands, as I supposed, of a favorite clerk whose acquaintance I had made during the summer. As such I introduced him to Rosa in the dim twilight, but, before the brief call was ended, I discovered my mistake, and that Mr. Ingalls himself was our guest. In a few words he explained that my note did not reach them till after the errand boy had gone home, adding that he had for some time missed my accustomed calls, and feared we had left town. He expressed regret at my illness, and a sincere wish to be of use in procuring help or

watchers, as we were strangers; and, finally, with all the ease of a natural gentleman, as he is, bowed himself out, after asking permission to do himself the pleasure of calling around again in a few days to see how I was getting on. Of course I assented, and thanked him, too, for I saw only a desire to return to us in part the kindness you had shown to him, and the recommendation you gave him was a sufficient passport to my confidence.

“On the very next visit, however, I had a suspicion that something besides an interest in my health, or a sense of obligation to you, drew him here and protracted his calls to an hour's duration for, though his words were addressed to the invalid in the easy chair, his eyes were as guiltless of wandering from the face of the sewer by the table as if he had been serving a penance of gazing for a stated time at one particular object. It was no bold, devouring stare, such as one would resent; in fact, I do not think he was conscious of looking at her at all, for his face showed only a pleased, dreamy feeling, such as one has when contemplating a beautiful picture or statue—and Rosa *is* beautiful—sweetly beautiful, that we all know.

“And so the weeks went on. I never rectified the mistake to her, for before the gate had fairly

closed behind him on his first visit, she commenced rallying me on having used arts to fascinate that poor young clerk, and declared she meant to write him an anonymous letter warning him of his danger. Partly in playful revenge for this, but more because of her foolish refusal, so long persisted in, to enter the store under any circumstances, I resolved to let the mistake remain a standing joke, anticipating some innocent sport when she should learn that the long-avoided, much-dreaded Mr. Ingalls was no other than the pleasant, chatty friend who had brought parcels of coffee and sugar, books, and the daily papers, fruit, flowers, and the war news to our humble home, as if he had been a dear elder brother. But I was disappointed in witnessing the denouement.

“One day, about two weeks ago, our minister came round to see if his sister, a maiden lady of leisure, might come and stay with me a couple of evenings while Rosa went to take charge of a stall at the Sanitary Fair. I appreciated the compliment and, as she needed the recreation, insisted on her going. She went in the afternoon with some other girls, and Mr. Ingalls escorted her home at a late hour in the evening. As they were leaving the nearly deserted hall, a merry comrade slapped him on the shoulder, with :—

“‘So, Ingalls, drew a prize, eh?’

“Rosa was thunderstruck. She looked up at him as a mother might look at her cradle changeling, to be sure that her eyes had not deceived her. No, it was the same face. What could it mean? Nor was he less puzzled. For more than half the distance home, dilate as he might upon different topics, he could gain nothing but merest monosyllables in reply, and he would never have guessed that the silent being by his side was the voluble saleswoman of the favorite and most profitable booth of the evening. At length he said:—

“‘A change seems to have come over the spirit of your dream, Miss Rosa?’

“‘There has,’ she answered, in a low tone, and with the air of one who felt herself intentionally wronged. ‘I have always supposed you were Charles English, one of the clerks in your store. Why was I deceived?’

“‘Indeed, I do not know. If there has been deception, I have been no partner in it. It was probably only a mistake, owing to the similarity of names. I did notice, at first, that mine had a peculiar sound coming from your lips, but it was the same from your sister’s, and I soon gave the matter no thought. But, tell me, is it a crime to be proprietor instead of clerk? if so, I will as-

sume the latter position at once, if only so I may be restored to your favor.'

"'Not that,' said Rosa, 'not that. It is of no consequence and, to be candid, I should not have mentioned it at all, but I thought—I feared you had been a party in carrying out a little practical joking at my expense.' And poor Rosa reddened and grew silent at the recollection of her long and unreasonable aversion to the name and its owner.

"To this, and a realization of her utter unworthiness to receive the great gift laid at her feet immediately thereafter, may be attributed, in part, a continuation of that silence.

"'So you thought that?' said Mr. Ingalls. 'Then you did me a great wrong. Now, to make amends,' and his voice took a tenderer intonation, as he bent his head to hers, 'and, that there may be no mistakes or misunderstandings in future, let me ask you to adopt my name as your own. Come, and be the sweetest white rose in my garden; the light of a home desolate—oh, so desolate—since the lids closed over a pair of eyes beautiful as your own scarce two years ago. I think it was this wonderful similarity of face and form which drew me to you till I nearly cried out with surprise and gladness when first I saw you passing up the aisle a few months back. It was

a vision I thought never again to see till I should myself stand among the angels. But God is good, and if I failed that day to join in the audible responses, it was because my heart was too full for the ceremony of words, and went with its burden of joy and thanksgiving straight to the throne. I resolved to lose no opportunity to make your acquaintance, and, should the gem prove worthy of its beautiful setting, to do just what I have done to-night—lay before you all that I am and have. Dear Rosa, will you accept?’

“Poor Rosa. It was the happiest moment of her life, for I am convinced, now, that the sadness which had troubled me so much was attributable less to the prospect of a separation from me, on which she was determined, than to the hopelessness of the passion she was secretly cherishing for the affable young ‘clerk;’ yet now, when her lips opened to give him answer, the tongue within was paralyzed. Then she tried to lift her eyes to his, but a pound weight at each lid could not have rendered her more powerless. All the blood in the system rallied to the rescue of these failing members, and she could hear distinctly each heart-throb. Every step was taken with the consciousness that the next she might stagger forward to the pavement. Poor Rosa! Had Mr. Ingalls

been a novice in the study of woman's emotions, he might have misconstrued her manner ; as it was, when he saw that words did not come readily, he said : 'Your lips give me no answer ; may I read it in your eyes?'

"What he read there we can only guess, for here Rosa, who, with her head lying in my lap, had whispered thus much in answer to my inquiries, grew suddenly dumb and, for all that can be gained from her on the subject, the remainder of that walk home is a dead blank in her memory.

"The next day Mr. Ingalls came to ask of me permission to make Rosa his own dear wife. I gave it, of course, without any misgivings or feigned regrets, and then in return for the confidence he had given me, told him of the event which was expected to take place here a week hence. He immediately insisted that there should be a double ceremony and, summoning Rosa, I left them to make up their minds on the momentous subject without aid of mine. I do not know what arguments were used, but I do know that I thought her cheeks would never fade to their natural color again, and that it was agreed that when next you come to the little brown house, it will be to give away both your penniless nieces to men of acknowledged worth and intelligence.

Truly, God has been good to us orphans. I hope and believe that our dear parents from their home above approve of our actions and motives, and rejoice in our happiness also. Don't you, dear uncle and aunty? How much we have to thank you for I will not attempt to say now, but I do hope that in your later years, we may show you that your kindness has not been forgotten, and that, should we prosper in wordly things, the temporal comforts with which you have surrounded us have been but the casting of your bread upon the waters to be returned after many days. With the hope of seeing you again soon, I close this already too long letter. Truly your loving niece,

MILLY.

"P. S. Ten o'clock of Thursday morning next is the time appointed, and you must be sure to come the day before, and even earlier if you can leave home so long.

"We, that is the doctor and I, had planned to to limit our bridal trip to a visit at the house of a relative of his living somewhere a few miles north; but Mr. Ingalls insists on going to Niagara for a week or so, and Rosa and I have begged to take you on our way home. Won't it be nice?

M. A.

CHAPTER IV.

That Thursday morning should have been clear and cloudless, as wedding days in stories always are. But it wasn't; there was a miserable drizzling rain, and the smooth leaden sky overhead augured favorably for a continuation of the same blessing. Umbrellas dripped over the heads of the few who were so fortunate as to possess them, as they crossed and recrossed the flooded streets to their places of business; those who were not, following the example of the feathered race, put themselves as far as possible in a shedding condition—hat rims turned down, shoulders rounded up, and arms shortened mysteriously into coat sleeves.

At an early hour the doctor, *in a new suit*, came picking his way up the driest side of the walk leading to the brown house, looking disappointed and glum—anything but the happy bridegroom he should have been. Could it be that he had already grown weary of his portionless bride, with her plain face and unaffected manners? for her face *was* plain in repose, or when not lit up by the half smile which broke over it whenever her lips opened to speak.

Milly was kneeling before a table arranging some flowers in a *pink-edged saucer* when the well-known step arrested her attention. Lifting her eyes to his face, she saw the cloud resting there, but was not left long in doubt as to its cause. He bent his head to her lips an instant, and then said :—

“I am not perfectly happy this morning, darling, as I expected to be. I have just been to the ‘American,’ where I directed Uncle Moses and his wife to stop until I should call for them, and there is no sign of their coming. I came up to tell you that I wish to return and await their arrival until the latest possible moment. They are a plain, old-fashioned couple, but I love them. He was my mother’s only brother, almost my only living relative, and I would not miss”—

The door of the next room opened, and Milly was about to give the strangers an introduction, but before she could speak, the doctor, standing in his boots like one petrified, exclaimed : “Moses Bar—nard! Why, Uncle Moses!! what on earth—how came you *here*?—Surely—I—uncle—why—where”—

“Yes, Reuby, I say ‘why, where,’ to you,” laughed Uncle Moses, seeing his nephew wasn’t likely to get any further in his greeting. “You

didn't s'pose I was goin' to pay out my money to the tarvern, when I could stay here for nothin' with my wife's nieces, did you, hey? Guess I ain't quite so green as that—don't you, Milly?"

With this, the doctor turned to Milly, but the look of blank astonishment with which she gazed from one to the other gave no clue to the mystery, but convinced him she was innocent of any part in the game which, he fancied, was being played on him.

"You see," pursued Uncle Moses, for no other voice seemed likely to break the silence, "I've been a-carryin' out a little plan of my own, an' ef you'll set down, an' call Rosa an' yer a'nt, I'll tell you a little suthin' 'bout it afore the minister comes."

Milly stepped to the door of the low chamber and called: "Rosa, aunty, come down."

The doctor stirred not till Aunt Hannah took him by the hand warmly, assuring him she was "nyther ghost nor speret," and led him unresisting to the lounge.

"You look beat enough, all on ye," said she, "an' no wonder; but I want to tell you in the beginin' that it's none of my cookin'. I telled *him*, a great while ago, that no good ever come of walkin' in the dark, an' concealin' things, an'"—

"Now, Hanner, you know you 'greed you'd let me have my way 'bout this thing, an' when I've explained the matter, ef the young folks aint sat'sfied then, you may hev your say, an' welcome.

"You know, Reuby," and the old man laid his right forefinger in the palm of his left hand, "you know that I've allus cal'lated that you'd hev the bulk of my prope'ty. I don't cal'late much different *now*; but I didn't know then nothin' about that these gals—children of my wife's sister, an' comf'table enough off as fur as I knew—was a goin' to be left orphants, and poor. You know as well as I that yer a'nt hez done full her sheer in 'cumulatin,' an' ef I'm wuth a cent to-dayi'st owin' to her care an' equanimity. So I said to myself, it 'll never do, Moses, never in the world; they've jes as good a right to a part of your prope'ty as that ere scapegrace of a nevy that you've sot your heart on so; an' you'll never be able to die easy unless even you divide 'bout; fer you've gi'n him his eddication, an' what's more, there's a hundred ways fer a man to git a livin' and make money where there's one fer a woman. Wal' I had consid'able arguin' of that sort to du afore I made up my mind, an' I confess now that all I sent you to York to spend

your last vacation fer, was so that you needn't fall in love with these pale-faced, penniless chits. I couldn't find no fault with em, an' no more I couldn't quite fergive em fer comin' between me an' my plans of a lifetime; but when I come to know em better I said to myself, *she's* jest the one fer him." Here he gave his head a sideways jerk towards Milly.

"Then fer the fust time in my life I thought of turnin' match-maker; but when I broached the subject to Hanner, there, she come the nearest to givin' me a lectur of anythin'. But, fin'ly, though she wouldn't promise to help a mite, she did consent to keep still while I worked. I don't think she would, though, ef she'd a knowed how in the end on't a favorite the'ry of hern was going to be upsot, that is, that nothin' in real life ever happens like what we read in books; an' that all the young folks marry nowadays from pecun'ery motives, an' so on. You see we've took a mag'zine nigh on to twenty year, an' wife reads the stories to me evenin's but allus declares there aint a word of truth in em, an' gits real *putchy* coz I feel sorry fer the poor critters when everythin' goes agin em."

"Putchy!" said Aunt Hannah, "I aint putchy, and I don't mind your feelin' sorry, but it duz

put me out to have you set to, an' whistle the 'Bower of Prayer' with all yer might and main right in the middle of a chapter. But the children's wonderin' what else you've got to say ; I know by ther looks they be."

"Wal, arter Reuben had made up his mind to locate down here I made up mine what to do next ; an' I did it. You see, I dassent do too much coz, as she said, ef things sho'dn't turn out well, I'd hev a good deal to think on fer the rest of my life ; so I jest concluded to set things a goin' a little, an' leave the rest to Prov'dence. It's come out better'n I'd any right to expect, for arter Rosa flared up so when I spoke of Mr. Ingalls, I give up all hopes in that line ; but last week when I got Milly's letter, I'll be hanged ef I knew what *to* do."

"Wal, I know what you *did* do," said his wife, "you whistled Yankee Doodle after you got to bed."

"Oh pshaw ! I don't remember no such thing as that ; but I have a tol'able clear rec'lection of going to the village next day and gittin' these papers," and he handed one to each of the astonished trio. "I see Ingalls last night, an' give him a receipt in full—principal an' in'trest. I

never see a feller so sot back ; he'd no more idee on't than he hed of bein' brigerdeer gin'ral."

"You see ther's, say only about seven thousan' apiece now, but ther'll be another five each on the farm when yer a'nt an' I've done with it, besides—there, stop, I won't hear a word on't," lifting his hand, deprecatingly, as the doctor attempted to speak. "I've suited myself, an' proved to Hanner that everybody don't marry for money, an' I hope she 'll be willin,' arter this, to believe some of the milder sort of yarns. At any rate, I'm goin' to give the schoolmarm up in our district some letters I've got to hum, an' sich other information as I'm able, an' see what sort of a thing she 'll make on 't, an' send it to be printed in one of them mag'zines."

"O uncle!" again protested Rosa, but this time the doctor silenced her with:—

"Do it, Uncle Moses! do it! and what you don't know I'll tell myself. I confess I've shared Aunt Hannah's belief that nothing good ever happened to a fellow now-a-days; and I am disposed to show my gratitude by helping you to carry out your little project. Tell her to put me down as the happiest man in existence, on this the twenty-third day of October, Anno Domini, eighteen hundred and sixty——. But there comes

Ingalls and the rector up the street. Now, let me kiss your dear old face as if it were a woman's! I can't help it, there!" and he suited the action to the word. Then he hugged Aunt Hannah with an unction that might have made Milly jealous had not her eyes been blinded by happy tears, as she gave the old man a fervent kiss on either cheek.

Rosa followed, and when the old lady slipped a little paper in her hand, whispering, "It's for for you an' Milly to get some fixin's an' fur-belows with," she broke down utterly, sobbing and laughing altogether.

"Five hundred!" she exclaimed, as she glanced at the figures on the check. "You don't mean it! Why aunty, uncle, have you turned to gold?" Then she wiped her eyes hastily, lest the redness should spoil her beauty.

"Here, Reuby, quick take this," said the old man, thrusting out a roll of greenbacks. "It's for travellin' expenses. Ingalls understands it, but the Dominie don't. I want you to take the gals to York an' Washin'ton while you 're 'bout it. They've never seen much of the world, an' as they've been industrious an' equinomical, they deserve a little rekeration."

Uncle Moses would probably never have suf-

ferred this chapter to come to an end if left to himself, but luckily he was a bashful man in the presence of strangers, and sunk to his arm-chair and silence immediately on the entrance of the rector and Mr. Ingalls.

For this Rosa secretly rejoiced, though she would scarcely have owned it even to herself, for just then every breath was an involuntary benediction on the old man, not for the future wealth he had bestowed, but for the present means of adorning herself in a way to make her worthy the admiration of him, who, in her overweening love, she had classed as not a whit lower than the angels.

If the doctor was the happiest man in the universe, she would have claimed to be the happiest woman. Milly and Mr. Ingalls were more moderate in their estimate, and were willing to accord to many another bride and groom a state of bliss similar to that in which they were reveling.

Yet Rosa has never had justice done her in these pages. Her lover was right when he fancied he saw in her the germ of a beautiful soul. Hers was one of those natures which ripen to perfection in the sunshine of love and happiness, but whose juices grow sour and waste in its absence. No one can but be glad to see this most potent

beautifier lavished without stint or measure, but a contemplation of these physical and mental graces combined leads shallow people to suppose that a faultless exterior, and that only, can contain a faultless character. A great mistake.

The ugliest oysters grow pearls but give them pearl food. Plant love in the heart and you may look for a harvest of beauty. But it depends always on the depth of the soil, and whether the ground was fallow or had been seeded to selfishness. In the latter case there is little hope; and *none* if there be rooted the tares of jealousy and envy.

Rosa's heart was a garden of rare plants, whose leaves turned as naturally for sustenance to the light in her husband's fond eye, as the sunflower to the meridian at noonday. Its borders widened and deepened till there was room, not only for friends, but for all God's needy everywhere. She was an almoner of temporal things to the poor, of sympathy to the suffering. What had been only a vague sense of gratitude to her kind old uncle and aunt, grew to a warmer and deeper feeling, as the frequent letters written from the Capital the following winter attested. She did not turn "hospital nurse" exactly, but inclination led her to the couch of many a sufferer, who needed a

kind word or a letter written "to mother" more than pills or surgery.

"Am I in heaven?" whispered one poor fellow, as he opened his eyes on the tender, wistful face bent over him.

"No," said the surgeon, "not a bit of it."

"Then I'm just going, for I saw an angel."

The color came back, and a smile with it, when the "angel" put off the jetty curls from his brow and left a kiss thereon—a kiss so human as to remove all doubt of her terrestriality.

But in this digression I came near forgetting to record—and how could my story be complete without it?—that the couples whom we left on the threshold of matrimony were with due form and ceremony made one; that meantime Aunt Hannah, wiping the mist from her spectacles, made an inward resolution to believe all she read after this, from Revelation down to war telegrams; that it was only by the most desperate efforts and the insertion of his forefinger between his lips, that Uncle Moses kept the "Bower of Prayer" from issuing from those convulsively twitching organs. Finally he got the better of his feelings so far as to be able to give "Reuby" some excellent parting advice as to the danger of pick-pockets and theatres, and was sure he had better

go to "Mr. Aster's tarvern and put up, for he reckoned, all things considered, it was 'bout the convenientest place there was out." Then he kept the barouche waiting while he called Rosa back to ask her, with a merry twinkle in his eye, what answer he should carry to Mr. Bardwell.

Blessings on thee, Uncle Moses, with all thy quaint, funny, old-fashioned ways. And blessings on thy "stratagem." It proves, if nothing else, that it is better to divide one's gold while one lives to share in the happiness it gives, than to hoard it till expectant heirs, struggling with poverty, are driven at last, even against their will, to watch with indifference, or await with eagerness the failing of breath, the palsying of limb.

For me, from such a fate may Heaven forfend!

—*Godey's Lady's Book*, 1867.

Come to Me in Dreams and Kiss Me.

Memories dark, at times flit by me,
Linger oft, until it seems
All life's joys are merged in sorrow,
Lost in shadow all its beams :
And I shrink from going forward
Where no ray of sunlight gleams,
But I remember—and it lightens—
The kiss you gave me in my dreams.

Friends may change and greet me coldly,
Though their grasp once earnest seemed ;
Scorn me they whose promise truer
Than the unfailing stars I deemed ;
Till deserted stands the castle
Which with loving spirits teemed ;
Yet in silence I'll remember
How you kissed me when I dreamed.

Not to drink at Marah's fountains,
Will the gods forever press me ;
And I guard a hope continual
That you'll come again to bless me !
Life has something still in promise,
Though its higher favors miss me ;
For in my joy and in my sorrow,
You will come in dreams and kiss me !

Poor Wood.

[This sketch antedates the period when glowing coal fires sent thermal waves from cellar to attic, thus vanquishing—indoors at least—half the terrors of our dreaded northern winter.]

READER, pause while I ask a single question. Have you ever felt the full meaning of these two little words? If yes, then lay this paper right away, for I have no wish to harrow your feelings with painful reminiscences. Turn over for the twentieth time the stick of sizzling green wood in the stove, hoping thereby to coax it into a blaze, and if this fail, as it will, wrap yourself in your warmest shawl, cuddle closer in the big chair and forget your chilled fingers and toes in the pleasant story on the other page.

“But, my dear Mrs. Trot,” says some astute and analogical reasoner, “are you not treating us to paradoxes? Warm shawls, big chairs and the daily paper are not the usual accompaniments of poverty, nor are they found in abodes where fuel is not good and plenty of it.”

“Yes, but they are though!—begging your pardon for the contradiction—I have in my mind’s eye at this moment several stately dwellings where either of the pictures on the parlor wall, or the

gilt-edged volumes on the centre table, would keep the room warm from year's end to year's end, and yet one is scarcely comfortable from the time one sets foot in the house, until literally a freezing good bye is spoken. I know the lords of these mansions would resent as an indignity any intimation that they are not 'good providers;' and so they are in the main. There is no lack in larder or closet; the table is well and abundantly spread; they are each a genial, social family, and but for one or two trifling things, pleasure would reign unlimited. One is, you are a *little chilled*; the other, that the flushed and worried face of the wife as you sit at tea makes an uncomfortable feeling creep over you, as if somehow you had something to do with it. It is all explained, however, when she passes a plate of pale biscuit, with the remark, in a deprecating tone, "I'm afraid I took them out a little too soon, as it was late; they may not be quite done."

Poor woman! She never for a moment thinks of laying a tithe of the blame where it belongs, on the broad shouldered man opposite, who had brought in an armful of coarse green wood to bake them with, and who says complacently to his neighbor, between two sips of tea, "I believe, Mrs. Wilson, it's quite a knack to bake biscuit;

though, if I remember rightly, you never fail." The subject is dropped when that lady replies curtly, looking him full in the face, "Never, when I have good wood."

Now Mrs. Wilson might truthfully be charged with malice prepense, but let us not blame her too much, for was not the worried looking woman her dearest friend at ——— seminary; (and the tie had held good through all the intervening years) and had she not been trying ever so long to study out what made Mary Thornton's face grow pale and careworn, while her own—she took her husband's word for it—had not a single track upon it? This afternoon she had clapped her hands mentally, if she did not cry 'Eureka!' certain that she had discovered all, when through a half-open door she heard Mary say in a low, pained voice, "John, I can never get tea with this stuff; won't you get a little something fine to go with it?" Surely if little drops of water wear away a stone, little trials, coming daily, with power to change a naturally sweet voice into tones like that, must wear away any woman not made of stone, and Mary didn't happen to be. Such was Mrs. Wilson's thought, as she glanced up at her companion to see if she, too, had been an involuntary listener. Concluding the secret was all her

own, she very discreetly kept it, only saying, "Julia, please, as you are nearest the stove, won't you see to that fire a little?"

"Certainly, I was thinking of it myself."

Lifting the lid of a substantial, mahogany-painted, well-varnished wood-box, and then opening the door of a glistening, latest patent parlor stove, that lady added dryly, "there's no fire to see to, and nothing to see to it with. Are you very cold?"

"N-no, not very, and cold or warm we've only a little while longer to stay, now."

Both ladies laughed a little shy laugh, as if each understood the real state of the case, but had too much delicacy to speak of it there; and neither showed any want of alacrity, when an hour afterwards they were summoned to a late tea.

And so Mrs. Wilson detailed the whole thing to her husband that night over their own crackling fire, with many a half-angry interpolation, winding off with, "My opinion is, Mary is just being plagued to death with poor wood."

"La now, du tell," says Aunt Roxy from the corner. "I shouldn't wonder a mite, for come to think on't it used to be jes so to his mother's. I remember stayin' to Mis' Thornton's a week once, when she was sick, an' 'twant half the time we

hed wood enuf to keep her room warm till mornin', and then he'd come in lookin' so pompous like—for all the world jes like John—an' ask her how she was, an' if there was anything she wanted; an' she'd say in her meek way—I most wanted to shake her for't—'No, dear, only if you'd make a little more fire.' 'Twas well for him I wan't his wife, for he'd got one blast, I can tell you."

Both her auditors laughed, but remembering she had never had anybody to "dear" or "blast," forgave her, and she went on.

"I know brother Dan used to say there never came a rainy spell in summer, nor a snow storm in winter, that Thornton's team wan't hitched up to get a jag o' wood, an' then it lay out in the wet, choppin' from hand to mouth, and poor, dozy stuff at that."

"Well," said Mr. Wilson, "that's a good deal the way it goes over at John's, but there's some excuse for him in the fact that wood is scarce on his farm, and his Uncle Job gives him what he can pick up on his, after they have got out all that's suitable for market; it's no small item in these times when wood is four or five dollars a cord at the cheapest."

"Out upon such an excuse as that," said his wife, with an impatient gesture. "So poor Mary

must die inch by inch to save that rich man a few dollars a year. Why old Lear's daughters, the heiresses I mean, were angels of kindness compared to the man who coolly calculates in that way to bring additional cares upon a woman already overburdened, even if she had the best of everything to do with; I say it's a wicked shame."

"So, 'tis, wife, I'll agree, and sooner than have somebody's face I know of lose all its dimples and freshness at thirty-five, I'd buy every stick of my wood, and pay the highest market price for it; that's so. And another thing, if my boys become ever so shiftless in the future, they can never say there wasn't always plenty of good dry wood in my wood house, no more than I can say it of my father."

"Nor he o' his'n afore him," put in Aunt Roxy; "I know somethin' about that, myself. Talkin' o' fresh faces, though, makes me think of one that faded all of a suddint a good many years ago. You remember old Elder Mosely, Deacon Mosely's father? Wal, he married my cousin Judy for his second wife; his first was—let me see—I don't rightly remember, but believe a Stewart—anyway she was allus a poor, woe begone lookin' thing, an' finally died of fever, ravin' to the last 'bout 'them pies bein' all raw on the bot-

tom,' an' 'soggy wood, and stuff o' that sort. Come to find out, she'd worked herself e'en a'most to death makin' a Thanksgivin' supper, an' when at the last minit she'd heat her brick oven an' all the most important things come out half-baked, she give up, an' went to bed and never got up agin. Everybody said though, Judy'd do well enuf, cos she'd allus hev her own way; but ten years arterwards, when I come back from Chenang, I went there visitin' an' I didn't see nothin' on't. She picked up chips washin' day to bile all her clothes, and the next mornin' begun afore breakfast, 'bout wood to iron 'em with. 'O, husband,' sez she an hour arterwards, as he was glidin' through the front gate, 'did you forgit that wood?' 'No,' says he, 'but I must go to the village right off. Mason was to pay me some money to-day; an' I want to go there afore he slips away with it; tell George.' George was found with an ax on his shoulder, and said father had sent him to drive the cows out 'n the buckwheat and put the fence up; where was Jim? Jim as independent as most boys o' fifteen, coolly told her he was goin' fishin'; 'Billy would cut the wood.' When Billy, the youngest o' her step sons, was hunted up, an' told what was required of him, he jes' stuck the knuckles of his two fore fingers into his eyes an'

whined out, 'I can't split them big sticks, mother, and you know I can't;' an' she did know it. I telled Judy if he an' them boys hated sin an' Satan as bad as they seemed to hate the ax an' beetle, they was all sure o' Heaven, even if they was foreordained for t'other place. The next day, when she got her basket out, sich a mess! It was dog days you see, an' the caliker clothes was all sour and smelt like a baby's dirty apron, an' a couple o' new fine shirts was kivered all over with little fine red specks, as if they was jes' comin' down with the measles; an' everything else of the same sort. That winter she took her death tendin' a week old baby in a cold room—lived only three days. The baby wouldn't feed, an' died in a week. Now, as I told the Elder, when he was takin' on, I hope there wa'nt nobody to blame. 'No,' says he, 'Roxy, it's the hand o' Providence, but it's drefful hard.' The hand o' Providence! umph! I wanted to give him a piece o' my mind, but thought I wouldn't, for the critter felt bad enough. Strange he couldn't see. I never wanted to go there a'ter that, an' so I never knew his last wife, the Deacon's mother, nor whether she died the nat'ral way or froze to death; but one thing I do know, nobody ever cal'lated to go there in any of the months that had

an R in 'em, for what with cold weather, a cold house, an' cold stoves, you might as well plan a pleasure trip to the poles in Jiniwary. An' one thing—"

"Auntie, auntie, aren't you getting a little excited? I'm afraid you'll want two 'fetty pills' to-night instead of one to sleep on."

"No I shan't nuther; an' one thing I will say; if the devil don't take such men, there ain't no use havin' one, that's all."

Gough makes the hero of one of his inimitable yarns keep saying, "one thing puts me in mind of another," and this, said Mrs. Wilson, "reminds me of something I should hardly have thought of again, because I didn't more than half believe it at the time. You know that Streeter girl who worked for the Deacon last summer, and used often to come and borrow my magazine? Well, she, of her own accord, told me of this little incident, saying it was 'too good to keep.' One day Mrs. Mosely told her husband she was out of wood. It was haying time—you remember what "catching" weather we had and how late all the farmers were—and he told her he couldn't stop then; she must pick up something. She did so for three or four days, even to sending Maggie up the roadside fence, but on receiving the same

answer the second time, she very deliberately put the fish and potatoes into a kettle over a cold stove, and in due time called the men to breakfast. The Deacon said a shorter grace than usual, as he was in a hurry that morning, and proceeded to wait upon the table. Once, twice, thrice, he essayed to thrust his fork into a potato ; another and another was tried with no better success ; he's rather a dull man, you know, but at last a suspicion dawned on him. He leaned towards the offending tubers with a puzzled, scrutinizing look on his face, decidedly comical to the beholders, who, by this time having guessed the truth, were making desperate efforts to subdue certain nervous twitchings about the mouth. The Deacon, however, was blind to everything but the mystery before him, only once glancing up at his wife, who was dreamily dealing cream and sugar into the huge coffee cups before her. Suddenly, to make sure, he grasped one of the cold, wet things in his broad hand, but dropped it a great deal quicker than if it had been hot, and seizing his hat, fled the room. I think, from the description, his flight could not have been retarded, or his discomfiture lessened, by the "guffaws" which followed, and if he did not, as they say in the military department, "retreat in good order," he certainly did in good ear-

nest. Mrs. Mosely, with a very red, but a very good-natured face, brought on some pitchers of new milk, and the cold meat and vegetables from yesterday's dinner, with strawberry pie and nut-cakes, made a very comfortable meal. The deacon did not join the boys that forenoon, but the saw and ax did good execution, as the steaming viands at dinner attested, and, enjoying a good joke at any time, he wisely laughed with them at his own expense, but bribed them to silence with a treat all round, and the promise, which the boys exacted, of a new silk dress for "the lady" when the next load of cheese went to market.

"Bully for her!" exclaimed Wilson, "pity there wasn't some of the Macomber spunk in Mary; there'd be lively times."

"But, seriously, husband, after what has been said here to-night, I conclude this evil is hereditary, and makes clear that passage, 'The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children,' &c. That being the case, Willie Thornton can't draw our Alice to school on his sled again this winter, and she can carry her own books, too; so he need'nt call for them."

Mr. Wilson laughed at what he called her premature fears, reminding her that the children were only ten and seven respectively, "and be-

sides," he added, "for all you can do to hinder, Alice may marry the king of the Congo Islands, or some missionary to Komkacheeboochee, and go where she'll never see a comfortable fire, or a good meal of victuals again as long as she lives."

"Well, in the latter case—improbable as it is, especially the name—it would be some consolation to know that she expected some trials; I should hope, too, she would be sustained by a higher than earthly power, and perhaps be remembered long years after death as one who sacrificed much for His sake; but to settle down here with all the surroundings of wealth and die a martyr to poor wood, is another affair altogether."

There was no controverting that, so Mr. Wilson gazed at the coals, wondering if matches were made in Heaven; or if "Huldah" somebody's theory was correct, that "everybody was shook up together, and somebody blindfolded picked out two." Or, was it a lottery on a magnificent scale? Inclining to the latter view, he congratulated himself on drawing a lucky number, but remembered that for every one of these there were, alas, how many unlucky ones. Look around you, friend, how is it in your neighborhood? One to ten? twenty? thirty? forty?

Pshaw, never mind, dont try to answer it. 'Twill give you the blues.

"But come, wife," he said at length, "don't brood over the future; get your book, and let's have the rest of 'Hannah Thurston.'"

Thus we leave them to their happiness, after a brief acquaintance; but not so with you, my gentle lady reader; I haven't done with you yet. I propose to make you, nolens volens, for a day at least, mistress of one of these establishments of which Thorton's is only a picture in water colors. Whatever your real position may be, you will now form one of the largest, if not best class of American women, who do or personally oversee their own work, and have in return all the comforts and luxuries of life in abundance. Over one of these houses I shall proceed to install you; house, husband and children furnished, not to order, but certainly gratis; dear at that, you may think; but, never mind, it's only for a day.

The time of year is the first freezing, biting December weather, with a breeze which seems to come from all the four points of the compass at once, and which one feels so much more intensely than in midwinter. On such a morning as this you have a premonition on waking, from a tingling, painful sensation about the nose, that the

air is frosty. You lie a few minutes to fortify yourself, then plunge into the cold air-bath, dress hurriedly, shiver audibly at the clatter of little frozen daggers in the water pitcher, make a hasty ablution, not lingering long at the glass, and bend your steps kitchen-ward. On entering, you are met with a cold, smoky atmosphere that sets you to winking, coughing and strangling. Groping your way to the stove (for it is yet candle-light) you open the door and look in. Now you understand why, when your footsteps approached these precincts, your husband's were heard in quick retreat therefrom. The kindlings have burnt out, and there they lie, three great black sticks, the same Charlie had pronounced so "nice and white" the day before, and any attempt to disturb their fraternal relations is resented with a more choking, blinding puff of smoke. In sheer desperation, you seize the nearest paper; it's the double sheet and contains an unread hospital sketch, the President's message, and an article on "Our Distracted Country." Distracted country, forsooth! What's that in a case like this? You wouldn't save it—the paper, no nor the country either—at this moment, if you could; so in it goes, and by dint of vigorous

blowing, with your lungs for a bellows, you worry up a blaze.

Now for the Breakfast. You would like baked potatoes, but these are out of the question when the oven won't "siss" for a long hour yet; so you dump them into a kettle of water, and set your wits at work to see what else you can get with the least possible fire. Beefsteak is good half cooked, and on that you decide; but even then you must have three minutes' white heat to do it nicely. To add to your anxiety, you have a temporary boarder, a young man from the neighboring college, with very white hands, a very soft voice, and in truth very pleasing manners, though he did say the other evening in your presence that he considered eighteen dollars a month and *board round* a meager compensation for his services. To be sure he changed the subject immediately, and looked as if he regretted the remark; but as usual with us "poor women," it was too late, the arrow had gone home, and you resolved that he should have no reason to complain of boarding round while under your roof. Having made all necessary preparations, you proceed to cook that steak. Broiling is not to be thought of where coals are not, and an article ycleped "spider" is brought into requisition,

heated to a smoking point, buttered slightly, and a well pounded slice laid in. Now comes the tug of war, the time that tries women's souls, for on this dish depends all the rest ; if spoilt, nothing can make it up ; if otherwise, nothing can be very bad. You watch it with an interest akin to that with which an experimenting chemist watches his crucible. Ninety seconds, and one side is a dry, crisp brown ; you turn it over, almost praying that the other may do as well. But, alas for human hopes, "the word of promise" is not kept even to the ear. An ominous s-z-z-z strikes your tympanum, and in a moment more your beautiful steak lies blubbering in a sea of its own blood. There is no hope now, it has wept its life away, and nothing remains but a flabby, tasteless mass, which one would almost be ashamed to offer a hungry dog. About this time you look at the fire, and if you don't think "sumfin bad," then we are not all made alike originally, or else you have reached a higher round on the ladder of morality than one poor woman I wot of.

(O, Gail Hamilton ! Gail Hamilton ! I laughed till I cried at your "Garden," and laughed and cried when you "Moved," (have alternated regularly with each fresh essay ever since), but condolence ceased, and consolation came with the re-

flection that, after all, you have never reached the crowning trial of woman's lot, else, before either of these had there been a chapter headed like mine, Poor Wood.)

But a fit of repentance comes over me. I meant to have taken you through a whole day—baking day when the bread rises and rises, and runs over before you can get the oven hot enough to receive it, and finally comes out as pale as your own sad face. A day when the brown loaf reveals a heart as heavy as the leaden thing within your bosom, and as raw as the ever fresh, ever open wounds occasioned by that cruelest of weapons, poor wood. A day when the cakes for the Christmas tree fall flat, and the pancakes are pronounced sickly; a day when the nut-cakes are fat soaked, and the roast pork rare; a day when on seeing a load of friends drive up to the gate for an afternoon visit, you clasp your hands theatrically, exclaiming, "Not a stick short enough for the parlor stove!" Yes, I intended you should have had the whole day, clear up to the hour when you creep shiveringly from a cold room into icy sheets, and at last, when snugly folded in the arms of Morpheus, have a decidedly new revelation of beatific regions; a Heavenly form hovers over you, and with one hand

pointing upward, whispers, "Child be comforted; There, there is no poor wood!" Let me caution you against repeating your dream to the family, lest you be met with the query "if the visitant wasn't pointing *down* instead of up?" It's a low insinuation, any way, and not worthy a thought, for if I have been rightly instructed, they don't depend on wood "down there."

Even allowing such to be the case, the place will have lost half its terrors given me the privilege of appointing the *Committee on supplies* during my sojourn.

Different persons at different times, have written and sung of their preference in regard to a final resting place. One plaintive and pathetic, pleads, "O, bury me not in the deep, deep sea;" another, "Let me sleep on the bank, where the violets grow." But I, only this, Bury me not in Greenwood! I do n't think I'd rest well there. There is something in a name, the immortal William to the contrary notwithstanding. Geniuses, and persons of note have, in all time, chosen or written their own epitaphs. Always of a sentimental and poetical turn of mind, I should like something respectfully affectionate and mildly laudatory; but the matter is settled. Trot declares it shall be only: "Warm at last." May it be true!

But I spare you ; not because the subject is exhausted, but my fire is ; not out of regard for your feelings, but in consideration of my own. "Poor Tom's a cold." Not from any interruption in the flow of words, but an interruption in the flow of the pen ; not from a congelation of ideas ; the congelation is in the inkstand. In truth, the puzzle has been all along, not to say what I have said, but to leave out what I have left unsaid. As Artemas would say, "It's a per-lific subjec'." And now I whip my fingers and breathe on my pen, that I may indite this, my latest asseveration. Had I a darling daughter to give in marriage, the first question concerning him who should ask for my treasure would be, not what is the state of his morals, but what is the state of his WOOD PILE ? And if any are so daring as to question the judiciousness of such a proceeding, may they have the "fever an'ager" without quinine for half a century or so, and then spend the rest of their days hutless, on the glaciers of Greenland !

—*Springfield Republican*, 1864.

To Blanche.

I know a little dove-eyed child,
Sweet as a rose or violet wild :
All hearts she wins by the shy grace
Of way and word ; while on her face—
Lovely as angels— you behold
“A soul most rare” in letters bold.

Dear child ! may never storms arise
To cloud the light in those soft eyes:
May never sorrow's brooding wing
Fold over thee : nor any thing
Save love and joy and hope and rest
Find lodgment in thy pure young breast.
And Blanche ! be this my earnest prayer,
Lord keep what he has made so fair.

To Taconic.

O Mountain fair ! Not face of friend can be
Than thy enchanting curves more dear to me,
On you mine eyes first oped ; of you one boon I crave,
Throw lovingly your shadow on my grave.
My rest will sweeter be if I but know
That at your feet I lie : and when the glow
Of daylight fades away I still shall sleep
Secure, Taconic, for you'll watch and keep.

The Unspoken Warning.

A Mother's Experience.

I AM no believer in the supernatural. I never saw any ghosts, never heard any strange noises; none, at least, that could not be accounted for on natural principles. I never saw lights round the bed or heard knocks on the head-board which proved to be 'forerunners' of sickness or death; I never had even dreams 'come to pass,' and to spirits, in the common acceptance of the term, since the days of the Fox girls my very presence has been always a damper. I am not one of the sort who are always on the look-out for signs and wonders; and if want of faith in spiritualism or supernaturalism is a sin, I ought to have been the last one to look for so marked a—you may call it what you please, I call it divine interposition, as the one I am about to relate, all the witnesses to which—and they are not a few—are still living.

One bitter cold day in winter a merry party of us, nestled down under furry robes, went to meet an appointment with a friend living a few miles distant, with whom we were to spend the afternoon and in the evening attend a concert to be

held near by. The sleighing was delightful, the air keen and inspiring, the host and hostess genial as the crackling fires in the grates, and the invited guests, of whom there were many besides ourselves, in that peculiar visiting trim, which only old-time friends, long parted, can enjoy. Restraint was thrown aside; we cracked jokes; we chattered like magpies, and not a little of the coming concert, which promised a rare treat to our unsophisticated ears. All went merry as a marriage bell, and merrier than some, till just before tea, when I was seized with a sudden and unaccountable desire to go home, accompanied by a dread or fear of something, I knew not what, which made the return appear, not a matter of choice, but a thing imperative. I tried to reason it away, to revive anticipations of the concert; I thought of the disappointment it would be to those who came with me to give it up, and running over in my mind the condition in which things were left at home, could find no ground for alarm.

For many years a part of the house had been rented to a trusty family; our children were often rocked in the same cradle, and half the time ate at the same table; locks and bolts were things unused, and in deed as in word we were neigh-

bors. In their care had been left a boy of ten years, the only one of the family remaining at home, who knew that when he returned from school he was expected to bring in wood and kindlings for the morning fire, take supper alone or with little Clara E—— as he chose, and otherwise pass the time as he pleased, only that he must not go into the street to play or on the pond to skate. He had been left many times in this way, and had never given occasion for the slightest uneasiness; still, as this nameless fear grew upon me, it took the form of a conviction that danger of some sort threatened this beloved child.

I was rising to go and ask Mr. A—— to take me home, when some one said, ‘You are very pale; are you ill?’

‘No,’ I answered, and, dropping back in the chair, told them how strangely I had been exercised for the last few minutes; adding, ‘I really must go home.’

There was a perfect chorus of voices against it, and for a little time I was silenced though not convinced. Some one laid the matter before Mr. A——, who replied, ‘Nonsense; Eddie is a good boy to mind, will do nothing in our absence that he would not do if we were there, and is enjoying himself well at this moment, I’ll warrant.’

This answer was brought to me in triumph and I resolved to do as they said, 'not think about it.' But at tea my trembling hand almost refused to carry food to my lips, and I found it utterly impossible to swallow a mouthful. A death-like chill crept over me, and I knew that every eye was on me as I left the room. Mr. A—— rose, saying in a changed voice and without ceremony, 'Make haste; bring the horse round; we must go right away. I never saw her in such a state before; there is something in it.' He followed me to the parlor, but before he could speak I was pleading as for dear life that not a moment be lost in starting for home; 'I know,' said I, 'it is not all imagination, and whether it is or not I shall certainly die if this dreadful incubus is not removed shortly.'

All was now confusion; the tea table deserted, the meal scarce tasted; and my friends, alarmed as much at my looks as at my words, were as anxious to hurry me off as they had before been to detain me. To me those terrible moments seemed hours, yet I am assured that not more than half an hour elapsed from the time my fears first found expression before we were on the road towards home. A horse somewhat noted for fleetness was before us, and with only two in the cut-

ter—the rest staid to concert, and made Mr. A— promise that if nothing had happened we would return—we went over the road at a rapid pace. I knew from the frequent repetition of a peculiar signal that the beast was being urged to his best, yet I grew sick with impatience at the restraint. I wanted to fly. All this while my fears had taken no definite shape. I only knew that the child was in danger, and felt impelled to hurry to the rescue. Only once was the silence broken in that three-mile journey, and that was when, on reaching an eminence from which the house was in full view, I said, ‘Thank God the house isn’t on fire.’

‘That was my own thought,’ said Mr. A—, but there was no slackening of speed. On nearing home a cheerful light was glimmering from Mrs. E—’s window, and before the vehicle had fairly stopped we were clear of it, and opening the door, said in the same breath, ‘Where’s Eddie?’

‘Eddie? why he was here a little while ago,’ answered Mrs. E—, pleasantly, striving to dissipate the alarm she saw written on our countenances. ‘He ate supper with the children, and played awhile at marbles; then spoke of Libby Rose having a new picture book, and that he wanted to see it. You’ll find him over there.’

With swift steps Mr. A—— crossed the street to the place mentioned, but returned with, ‘He has not been there.’ Eddie was remarkably fond of skating, and my next thought was that he had been tempted to disobedience. I said calmly, ‘We will go to the pond.’ I was perfectly collected ; I could have worked all night without fatigue with the nerves in that state of tension ; but Mr. A—— said ‘No, you must go in and lie down. Eddie is safe enough, somewhere about the village. I’ll go and find him.’ But there was nothing in the tone as in the words to reassure me.

As he spoke he crossed the hall to our own room, and turned the knob. The door was locked. What could that mean ? Eddie was either on the inside or had taken the key away with him. Mr. A—— ran round to a window with a broken spring which could be opened from the outside. It went up with a clang, but a dense volume of smoke drove him back. After an instant another attempt was made, and this time, on a lounge directly under the window, he stumbled on the insensible form of little Eddie, smothered in smoke ! Limp and apparently lifeless he was borne into the fresh, cold air, and after some rough handling was restored to consciousness.

From that hour I think I have known how Abraham felt when he lifted Isaac from the altar unharmed, in obedience to the command of the angel of the Lord. True, I had been subjected to no such trial of strength and faith ; my Father knew I would have shrunk utterly before it ; yet, if it was not a similar messenger that whispered to me in the midst of that gay party an hour previous, I have no wish to be convinced of it, and were the book placed in my hands which I knew had power to rob me of this sweet belief, I would never open it.

Eddie said on returning from school he made a good fire, and as the wood was snowy, thought he would put it in the oven to dry ; something he had never done before. Then on leaving Mrs. E ——'s room he went in for an apple before going to see Libby Rose's picture-book, and it seemed so nice and warm he thought he would lie down a while. He could give no explanation as to what prompted him to turn the key ; it was the first and last time ; but this could have made no difference in the result, for no one would have discovered the smoke in time to save his life. The wood in the oven was burned to ashes, but as the doors were closed there was no danger of falling embers setting the house on fire ; and had we

staid to the concert everything would have been as when we left, except that little Eddie's voice would never more have made music for our ears. Every one said that with a delay of five or even three minutes we should have been too late.

Many years have passed since then, yet now, when the lamp of Faith burns dim, and God and His promises seem a great way off, I have only to go back to this—the first, the last and only manifestation of this nature—to feel that ‘As a father careth for his children so careth He for us.’ ‘Deliver us from evil, for Thine is the power’ is no mere formality, but words pregnant with meaning.

—*Springfield Republican*, 1864.

Many years after this occurrence the account fell under the notice of Mr. Richard Hodgson of the American Branch of the English Society for Psychical Research who asked for corroborative testimony. This being furnished the whole appeared in the Society's Journal for May '91 with the following in addition.

Less than two years ago a curious thing happened to me. I had been in Washington County, New York, giving half a dozen readings, and was on my way to Williamstown, where I had spent a part of the summer, and

where much of my wordly goods, in the shape of wearing apparel, was safely stowed in my room at the "Mansion House." With ticket purchased, I was serenely seated in the car, "box, bundle, and bag" beside me, the conductor's "All aboard" was at that instant in my ears, when I sprang to my feet with the force of an inward command, "Change your ticket and go to Elizabeth (N. J.). *Change your ticket and go to Elizabeth. Change your—*" Here a gentleman in the opposite seat—an utter stranger—rose and said: "Madam, have you forgotten something, can I help you?" I said: "Do you think the train will wait for me to change my ticket?" For there appeared to be no alternative. As I spoke I moved towards the platform; he followed, and seeing that the office was but a few steps distant said: "Go, I'll see that you are not left." I did go, and in a moment more was on my way to Elizabeth, *though I had not before even thought of such a thing.* Next morning, on reaching my friend's house, she threw her arms about me and sobbed out: "Oh, I have wanted you so." Then she led me to a room where an only and beloved sister lay in life's last battle. In an hour it was ended.

My poor grief stricken friend declared then—declares now—that my sudden change of purpose was a direct answer to her repeated though unspoken demand for my presence. And who shall say it was not? I wish to add that while I had learned by letter of the sister's illness of a chronic disorder, I did not suppose her case hopeless; indeed from the fact that no tidings had reached me lately, was hoping that she was on the road to recovery, and had I been questioned concerning her that 10th of November, 1886, should have replied confidently, "She will without

doubt last through the winter." My friend, by the way, is, much more than I, a believer in psychical phenomena.

Mr. Hodgson writes :

Mrs. G.—the friend referred to—has sent me her corroboration dated March 5th, 1890. The date of the incident, she states, was November 11th, 1886. She says :

"I had not expected Mrs. H.; did not at that time know where she was, so could not have summoned her had I wished to do so,—but in my trouble there grew upon me a great desire for her presence, and I said many times, 'If she only would come. If she were only here.'

"My sister's failure at the last was somewhat rapid, but of this Mrs. H. knew nothing, and when she told me of her sudden change of purpose, hundreds of miles away, I said, 'The impulse was sent you in answer to my wish,' or words to that effect."



Amphibious Freddy.

A Case of Congenital Hydropathy.

FREDDY was ushered on the stage in the midst of a violent thunder shower; the first music which greeted his ears was the splashing of rain-drops on the western window, now falling gently, anon driven furiously, as if the elements recognized in each successive thunder-clap a verbal command to storm the entrenchments. Whether it was here he fell in love with a rain-shower I cannot tell, but to this day he loves it as a duck loves a puddle, and usually on some pretense manages to stay out till thoroughly drenched, though he affirms he is "only a little damp."

His home stands on the upper end of an A-shaped island, formed by a small natural river on one side and an artificial branch sufficient to carry two or three mills on the other; the latter running noisily within a few feet of the house, and the former pursuing the very uneven tenor of its way a few rods to the rear; so that through all the days of Freddy's infancy, whether sleeping or waking, the soothing lullaby of running water was forever in his ears. What wonder that

he grew to love it, or that when his tiny feet first bore him out into the sunshine, he took, as by instinct, a bee-line for the brook? It was often remarked that there was a peculiar look in his eye, as if he were listening to something afar off—something beyond what was going on around him, though no one pretended to guess then at what was so plain afterwards, that spiritually at least he was a merman and listening to the babbling call of water-nymphs outside.

His bath hour was the most delightful period of the twenty-four, and often in warm weather, when everything else failed to quiet him, he was placed two or three times a day in a tub of tepid water, and left to amuse himself, only watching to see that he didn't get his head under; but even that I am now convinced, was a needless precaution. He was what nurses call a "worrisome" child, and when others would have been coaxed to an armistice with a bit of candy or a painted toy, he was bribed by setting a pail of water on the oil-cloth beside him, into which he plunged his arms to the shoulder with a crow of delight. In vain anxious old ladies warned his mother "he would sartin ketch his death o' cold," and just as vainly she asked, "What shall I do with him when nothing else will answer?" If at first she heeded

these warnings so far as to keep him dry for a day, it was only to give him a double dose the next, declaring, "he might as well die one way as another, and he would certainly cry himself to death without it." After a little she grew to nod her head knowingly, with, "Don't talk to me; water never'll hurt *that* child." Of course she meant when discreetly administered at her own hands, and had no reference whatever to the times he has since been fished out of rivers and mill-ponds, for then to appearances she is much nearer dead than the blue-eyed imp who tells her laughingly that "it's all in fun."

Up to seven months Freddy played in water only when it was given him, but at this time he took it into his head to run alone, gliding like a spirit, wee thing as he was, faster than weary feet could follow. If, in his peregrinations, a pail, kettle or tub greeted his vision, a shout of triumph announced the discovery, but if the pursuer was not too far behind he was forcibly restrained in his desires, and he soon learned to keep perfect silence while making rapid strides towards the haven. Just as they had learned to put things far up out of reach, and were hoping he would be a little less trouble, the wooing airs of spring floated in through open door and window,

the birds sang and fluttered and chirped, and more than all the waters gurgled gladly, and our yearling hero was perfectly crazy to get out of doors. And he *would* get out of doors, either by tumbling over the slide-board arranged for his benefit in the doorway, or creeping through a six inch space beneath, or with a chair climbing to the low window within and deliberately falling out; so it was decided that the best thing to be done was to remove all barriers, appoint some one whose especial duty it should be to guard his every footstep, and let him run.

Now the sport begins. Of course, be he never so faithful, the watcher's eye would sometimes wander a moment from his charge, and then souse—splash—scramble, and a dripping object was picked from the shallow stream and borne to the house and a suit of dry clothing. At first the children and maid were charged with carelessness, but when it came papa's or mamma's turn "on guard" the perverse child would do precisely the same thing, and before summer was over it was amusing to hear the reasons he gave for these multiplied mishaps. I forgot to mention that at ten months our prodigy startled the unexpectant minds about him by boldly pronouncing "papa," "doddy," (doggy) and words of that ilk, and fol-

lowed up rapidly, till at a year and a half he put sentences together as intelligibly as most children of three or four. Now this is an indubitable fact, and close on its heels I chronicle another, which shall relieve all anxiety in regard to the early doom supposed to attend precocious children. Freddy's precocity ceased, as is often the case, at four or five years, and at the present writing he is only an average scholar and loves play a deal better than books.

About this time a journey was proposed for the failing health of the mother, but she declared positively such a thing was not to be thought of with Freddy vibrating like a pendulum between those two streams. She should see him in all her waking moments doing battle with the aqueous element and in her dreams follow the slow and sad procession as it bore her darling to his tiny grave on the hillside. It was naturally supposed that, under such a mental regimen, physical recuperation would be rather slow, and the project was relinquished until a favorite auntie coming to the rescue, offered to take this *enfant terrible* into her own home and see to it that he got no more hydropathic treatment than was absolutely necessary for hygienic and dietetic purposes. When it was found that the only water-privileges

within a radius of two miles was a covered ditch and a well with a pump over it whose spout would not admit of more than one of the young walrus' arms at a time, the proposition was accepted, the journey made and Freddy not drowned. The visit was somewhat shortened though by the Fall rains coming on. A goose pond in the neighborhood would hold, in a wet time, water enough to drown a kitten, if held carefully in face downward, and a precipitate return home was decided on.

The next summer, after being duly impressed with the number and severity of the punishments in store if he didn't keep *out* of the water—*away* from it was out of the question—he, in company with a boy two or three years older, was allowed the liberty of the yard with a feeling of tolerable security; it vanished however as often as he failed to present himself after being absent long enough to get in, and out, and make his way to the house again. At such times the programme was to send one up to the brook, another up the river, and if, when they met at the fork, he had not been found, to conclude he had gone down stream, when accordingly down stream the searchers went. The punishments availed little, indeed were not often given for, dear, dear, how the

stones suddenly "rolled" when he touched them, though firm to the pressure of every other foot, or the plank on the bridge "tipped," or the "board broke," which had just carried another over safely.

Only once was he convicted of intent to do mischief, and that was when, having learned that no small part of the sin lay in wetting his clothes, he had tugged at buttons, tearing off some, unbuttoning others, till his dress was removed and laid on the bank, and taking the other skirts under his arm, deliberately waded into the embrace of his beloved second mother. But alas, to speak literally and alliteratively, of all the slippery substances scattered around this sublunary sphere for short-sighted simpletons to stumble on, not the least slushy is the slimy surface of smooth stones in a sluggish stream. So at least Freddy found it, for he was soon submerged, and after a fashion to satisfy the most ultra Baptist. Frightened—not at the bath, but at the condition of his clothes, and feeling the immediate necessity of making peace with his mother, he scrambled up the bank and over the few intervening feet to the parlor door, where he stood, with little rivulets trickling from his heavy hair down over face, neck and shoulders, and holding out the wronged garment

with both hands, whined in a tone most pitiable, "Mamma, mamma, me wet me pettitoat;" as if *that* were the only thing to be considered in the case. The picture was too much for the assembled company, and shrieks of laughter met the discomfited child. The mother hid her face for a moment, and then putting on a severe look led him from the room, but he said "me sorry" so often and so penitently that I have good reason to believe Freddy got no "reward of merit" that day.

Another time Biddy ushered him into the sitting-room in a similar plight with, "Indade, mem, an' he's jist *sopped*." The expression was not forgotten. A few weeks afterwards his father found him squabbling and "cutting up" in a shoaly edge of the river, and thinking to give him a lesson of a different sort, and one perhaps to be remembered, advanced cautiously and shoved him head first into the deep water. Freddy saw no joke in this summary treatment, and rising like a cork to surface made vigorous efforts shoreward, which as the pool was narrow was soon reached, but, poor fellow, another and another plunge awaited him. Somewhat exhausted by his struggles he slowly wended his way homeward, where he declared earnestly and bitterly,

“ Me never like papa any more ; he *sopped* me *free* times.”

If his companions sometimes helped him out of the water, one of them was once the means of helping him in. The river was considerably swollen by a long rain, and the delighted children watched the turgid torrent, wondering why they couldn't see the little fishes, and stones as usual. Freddy ached to get nearer and see what made the “ bubbles over yonder,” and a novel expedient was hit upon. A board was found and tugged to a flat stone on the bank, across which it was laid see-saw fashion, and Freddy directed his companion to stand on one end while he pursued investigations on the other. When the fearless boy had felt his way slowly to the extreme point of danger, his playmate, seized by a sudden impulse, and thoughtless of consequences, sprang off and left him battling in the tide. The strong current bore him on its surface a few yards, where in a curve he came close to the shore, and the friendly board, to which he had clung, swayed round at just the right moment and shoved him out of harm's reach and within that of his companion, who had followed close, ready to lend a helping hand should opportunity offer. After resting awhile the subdued children crept to the

house, where the wet garments were changed, and Freddy, wrapped in a warm shawl cuddled close in the arms of his grateful mother, whispering penitently, "Don't cry, mamma, me not do so 'gain, me fought me never see mamma and baby any more." When the locality had been examined, the danger comprehended, and the miraculous escape realized, no one could help feeling that Freddy was indeed the especial charge of Him who suffers not even a sparrow to fall unheeded. Though only two and a half years old he distinctly remembers this, probably because, as he says, it is the only time he was ever afraid in water.

After the third summer, partly because he was old enough to use some judgment of his own, and partly because he was considered strong enough to help himself out of the rivers when they were not swollen, there was less anxiety felt for his life, though string-pieces and planks were always remarkably treacherous under his weight, and he needs a signal hoisted to tell him when baths have been protracted to a proper length for sanitary purposes. Then, too, though none are more agile than he in other sports, comes there a ditch to be leaped, where his companions land high and dry on the other side, Freddy splashes down within

six inches of the nether bank, always declaring he didn't mean to, and as he is a truthful child in other things what right have we to doubt him here? and what more reasonable theory than that the water attracts and holds him by some mysterious power like that with which the star holds the needle?

Hark! there's *another* tumult in the hall below; a sound of hurrying feet and suppressed voices; and the remarkably calm faces the family put on as they pass in and out of her room arouse the fears of the invalid mother, and she asks, "What's the matter? has Freddy been in the pond again?" "Yes," says the girl, whose patience is utterly exhausted, "and I think you had better know it so as to forbid his going on there again. This is the third time he has been in this week, and to-day he would not have got out at all but for the help of the other boys."

"O dear," she sighs, it's the same old story; ever since that boy was big enough to buckle on skates, it has been just so." And she was right. Is there an air-hole in the pond? he is sure to find it; a weak spot? It gives way under him, though men pass over it with impunity. Does the ice part and a fragment float off? Behold, there stands Freddy, sailing away with it, to be lured

shoreward by poles reached and ropes flung to him. Does he jump into a sail-boat or scow securely moored by a large rope? the rotten old tetherings part instantly, and he is out on

“The sea, the sea, the open sea.”

Long and earnest talks avail nothing; it is all purely accidental, and he can only promise to be more careful in future. Doubtless he is; but at this blessed moment there are two entire suits in process of drying at the kitchen range and the mother anxiously asks, “Is there any remedy?” She has read carefully “The Mother’s Own Book,” “The Parent’s Guide,” and other instructive works, but none of them teach her how to keep this child from drowning himself. Argument is exhausted in the effort to convince her that he was born under the planet Neptune, and is the especial care of innumerable nereids; she is matter-of-fact and does not believe in these things, but yields a reluctant affirmation to the question,—“Is he amphibious?”

Five years have passed and Freddy, true to instinct (though still only a lad in years) has wandered hundreds of miles away from home and friends to take up his abode by the sea. He pleads earnestly to go a voyage, “just one—you know I

was always such a water-fowl;" but gets in answer, "You will never see your mother's face again if you do." So he is fain to content himself as best he may in sight of the broad, shining, shifting, beautiful ocean. The cradle-song of his infancy,—the rippling murmur of the brooklet, is changed to a lullaby in bass for his maturer ears; and he may lie for hours on her bosom (in a boat, of course) floating and rocking, oblivious to the noise and bustle of the world, forgetful of the past and intent only on the future, thinking such thoughts and dreaming such dreams as boys are apt to think and dream who have not yet reached their third decade. Awaken him gently, O Fate! not with rough tones or rude touch. Then with what intense delight he stretches himself upon a rock damp with spray and in dangerous proximity to the incoming waves, bearing in their deep hoarse tones whisperings sweet and tender as voices we love, till one bolder than the rest, reaches up to lave his forehead and kiss his feet, then reluctantly recedes, sighing and chiding him that he does not follow. But he does follow, with uplifted arms, as one goes to meet long absent friends, goes he out to meet those great green foam-capped breakers; and when his stay is too long protracted one can but have

visions of some fabled daughter of Oceanus—nymph fairer than the rest—meeting and bearing him to her home in the Deep. But he returns. Not yet is her power potent to hold him. But Oh! Freddy, beware! It is a treacherous element—a false friend. Trust it not too far, else, with all your love for it, it will yet bring you to grief.

To a Little Singing Bird.

B-lithest warbler of the spring,
E-vermore thy caroling
S-oftly falls upon the air—
S-weetest praise ; itself a prayer.
I-n garden, field nor woodland niche,
E-ver heard I tones so rich.

G-lad as now thy roundelays,
B-e they glad in coming days ;
R-unning o'er with joy thy cup,
A-s thou with joy fill'st other's up.
N-or come one note afar as soon
D-iscordant in thy life's sweet tune.

Madison, Wis., April 8, 1865.

Red.

A Sketch from Life.

MUSICAL prodigies there have been, musical prodigies there are; but if it is not mine to chronicle the latest and the youngest, then there be records and traditions of which this deponent knoweth not. In one of the older cities of these older states lives a—but I will not give data here; if you read my brief biographical sketch and then want them, you shall be gratified even to affidavits, “an’ you will.”

History testifies and tradition verifies the history—to use a Boston phrase—that there have been many youthful adepts in music who, later, were crowned kings by their fellows and dropped into their graves world renowned. I have, myself, seen a child of nine or thereabouts, hold thousands entranced while he made a piano seem a living creation acting under a divine impulse. Instances are many of that and other instruments being manipulated by children to a degree that only “hearing is believing;” but who knows of an eighteen months’ old baby that breaks into any one of a dozen popular airs and carries it to the

end as correctly as the most critically inclined could desire? He does not, as yet, apply the text, his repertory in that line being limited ; but that he knows it is proven by the fact that a word carelessly dropped in his hearing, which holds any prominence in the songs he sings, sets him going as effectually as a key applied to a music box.

“Good morning” from one member of the family to another, is sufficient ; and forthwith Ned strikes up the tune, “The morning light is breaking,” his language being, “Wah-wah wah-wah wah-wah-wah,” etc. It is supposed that this word was picked up in an effort to imitate the “Hurrah” in that patriotic old lyric, “Marching through Georgia,” as that was the first piece for which he showed a decided preference ; and it seems to satisfy him so far as his own expression is concerned, though from others he demands the literal interpretation, the true text. And, parenthetically, oughtn’t Ned to like patriotic tunes? His grandfather lies in an honored soldier’s grave ; his great, great grandfather figured prominently in at least one famous battle in the war of 1812 ; while several of his ancestors fought it out on that line in the eight years’ struggle for independence.

The strangest thing about this baby’s perform-

ance is that he needs no key given or aid in starting. When a new piece is sung in his presence he seems to listen intently, an expression of deep thoughtfulness in his dark hazel eyes; but there is no attempt at execution till sure of his ground, when he begins correctly and goes on independently. Ask for a piece by title even, and he responds. "Ned, sing 'Auld Lang Syne,'" and the quaint melody flows from his lips with such fidelity to the spirit of the text that, perforce, you are a convert to the theory of transmigration and that Burns lives anew in this small bit of humanity. Of course, nothing is claimed for Ned but that he imitates, rendering as he hears. If another sings he joins in on exactly the right note and continues in fast or slow time, as his accompanist may lead.

"O Baby! bring back"—my scissors, she would have added, for he had seized the implements and fled, to his own imminent danger; but he took his cue and sang as he ran, striking in on the *second* invocation.

"—bring back,
Bring back my Bonnie to me, to me;
Bring back, bring back;
Oh, bring back my Bonnie to me."

His mother quietly secured the dangerous in-

strument, and turned away with a look on her face which bespoke an inner consciousness that there was something uncanny about it all, something approaching the line of the supernatural.

“Was he ever taught?” Not a word. He is what nurses call a “good baby,” which means, simply, a well one; so has never had the amount of rocking and lullabies which falls to the lot of the average infant. But a sister, two years his senior, with a great fondness for what she is pleased to term “wock an’ sin,” has had her tastes gratified to a very generous degree, and Ned, it appears, has listened to some purpose.

“Then he comes of a musical family.”

Admitted. On both sides, indeed, in many diverging lines tracing backward, the talent may be found more or less marked. Tradition hath it that five generations back, in the later years of the century before this, a young brunette, “with cheeks as red as roses and eyes as black as coal,” stood at the head of the “tribe” in the village choir and did her trills and tremolos—they were much more in vogue then than now—so effectively that a visitor, whose deep, bass tones had visibly affected the volume of sound from his quarter of the gallery, declared emphatically to his companions, as they descended the stairs on the

outside of the "meetin' house," while the girls tripped down a similar flight at the other end "I'll spark that girl next Sunday night."

And he did.

Years afterward, when the elder sons and daughters—there were ten in all—had families of their own, it was still the invariable practice, as it had been ever since they were old enough to pipe a note, to gather at home every Sabbath afternoon with wives and babies, and there, in a semi-circular group, with father and mother as central figures ("Pappy" and "Mammy" was the universal appellative then), they turned every page in the old-fashioned note book and sung every "hem" and anthem, from "China" to "Dundee."

"Instruments?" Yes, tuning-fork that gave the pitch, sharp or flat as required. See! here is one, an heirloom. "Sell it?" Not much. Truly, every Sunday in that household was "Children's Sunday," and the impression still holds in the mind of one, then young, listener that, though Brocolini sings well and Patti is, really quite passable, there yet never was such music as floated heavenward through those open windows on a summer Sabbath afternoon. Why, years afterward when the baby wouldn't let her go to the

“Boston Jubilee,” she cried a little; but, remembering, took to herself the blessed unction that it, probably, wouldn’t beat those early home concerts anyway, and was reconciled. (She is rather glad now that she didn’t go, lest they might have been eclipsed.)

In the generations since, there have been aspirants to fame—a salaried singer here, a musical director there. One scaled the heights of earthly bliss the winter he led a college glee club on a conquering tour through the larger cities of the East. One studied with Albani’s trainer who declared, oracularly, that in respect to voice the two had even chances; but Fortune has not smiles for all, and we know that “many a flower is born to waste,” etc. Perhaps a handsome young man had something to do with the case; though the comparison ceases here, for a happy home is not a “desert” by any means. On the contrary, it is far preferable to the cares and vicissitudes of a great singer’s life. So holdeth the law of compensation good. This is in Ned’s paternal line of ancestry, and deserves not to be mentioned the same day as the other. (Is that slang, I wonder? And where does the new dictionary on that subject place it?)

It is not many years ago that a lady of rare

tastes and attainments took upon herself the musical education of her four daughters. Each might claim, by inheritance, talent worthy of cultivation, and each had developed noteworthy adaptability for the art. One, the youngest, outwardly of angelic mould and inwardly of such a nature as to leave the impression on every mind that she was truly an unwritten poem, dropped early from the ranks, but not till she had given proof unerring that had life and health been granted, her gift would have placed her upon heights unparalleled. "Did she reach them on the other side?" they ask, as their eyes rest lovingly on the beautiful copy which strangers' at first, refuse to believe can be other than a fancy picture of rare merit. The other three repaid with interest that mother's tender teachings—tender yet severe, rigid but loving—and today their feeling toward her is little short of worship.

"Results? Oh, yes! One succeeded the famous Emma Thursby in a metropolitan church, and kept on climbing till now she is accounted worthy to direct three infant minds on the road to eminence; another, the wife of a prominent literateur, delights all hearts with her rare voice; while the third—but here there enters my psychical aura a very sweet but very decisive, "stop that!"

and I stop. (I'll tell *you*, though, confidentially, Ned's her baby !)

But two mighty problems agitate me : Has all the music of all the generations centered in Ned's round, curly head ? Will he be able to hold it ? Croakers there be, "Aunty Dolefuls" in fine dress, who looked funereal and whispered, "Too bright to live," when, before his first birthday, Ned sang "Suwanee River," or accompanied his small sister as she piped :

"Desus 'oves me, vis I know,
Faw ve Bible tells me so ;
Ittul ones to him bewong,
We ah weak, but he is stw-a-a-ng."

But now, when Ned supplements with "Pop goes the weasel," or,

She's my sweetheart, I'm her beau,
She's my Annie, I'm her Joe,"

the reaction is sudden and final, and with delightful incongruity they snatch him up, exclaiming, "O you wicked little angel, you are too sweet for anything." To the noun without the modifier all willingly assent for, besides a lovely face and form, the softest, tenderest, soulfullest voice that ever fell on mortal ear, Ned's disposition is such that even a cynic must love him ; those not in that category literally go down at his feet. Mis-

chievous he is at times, of course, but perverse, never.

O Ned! Ned! Little one, sing and grow, grow and sing. We are impatient to know what niche in the temple of Fame is yours.

-- *Werner's Voice Magazine*, New York, 1892.

[It is about nine years since this sketch was written. Ned is now in Paris, and still retains his sweet voice and wonderfully correct musical ear. He is too full of boyish spirit and life, however, to do more than sing as a bird sings when it can't help it, or to amuse his French school-mates and masters by singing American songs to them in the evening, when the daily tasks are done.]



Mutual Blindness.

One there is who loves me—
Ah ! the blissful thought—
One there is who proves me,
And finds me lacking naught.
Blinded is his vision
To imperfections all,
I pray the scales may never
From those dear eyes fall.

Time's relentless finger
Touches brow and hair;
"Above the rest," he fondly quotes,
"I count ripe beauty rare."
Pain and cruel sorrow
Blanches lip and cheek ;
But "the heart is gentler,
And the soul more meek."

Old Care hath marked his furrows
Where once white dimples hid,
And youth's fires flash faintly
Beneath a drooping lid ;
But instead he seeth
"A mind's strong steady light
Shining far and clearly,
A star amid the night."

Oh ! blinded is his vision
To imperfections all,
I pray the scales may never
From those dear eyes fall ;
For the one who loves me
To other gives no thought,
And the one who proves me
Is proved and lacketh naught.

—*Godey's Lady's Book*, 1872.

My Young Lady; A Sketch from Life.

WHAT shall I do with her? She's sixteen if she's a day, but of all the irrepressible, unsentimental, fun-loving, laughter-provoking objects that ever shocked the eyes and ears of sedate matrons and prim misses this is the capsheaf. It is not the reaction of confinement and overtraining for, from childhood up, all childish sports and plays have been encouraged in the hope that when they had had their run, like whooping-cough or measles, they would subside and give room for things wise, things mature, things womanly. But alas and alack! my sensitive mother-heart is wrung anew, day by day, each bringing some later pang, some fresher surprise.

It is not willfulness, it is not mischievousness, nor in any way the essence of aggression or opposition, but simply an overplus of animal life and spirits, which, like air or water or any other natural thing, when pent up and restrained in one direction, breaks out in another. But these may be natural without doing anybody any harm, yet every one knows how ungenteel it is in these days for a young girl to be natural. She must

begin at this age, at least, to mince a little in her gait ; to lisp and study the tones and expression of her voice ; to desire much ornamentation of person, not of mind ; to affect a wealth of hair in the shape of coils and curls and switches of colored tow, all perched atop of her empty head like a toadstool on a wet chip, causing the hat to pitch down over the eyes and leaving the base of the brain, or the part where that organ should be, exposed to the piercing winds of heaven. She should begin to take care that she attracts the notice of young men, learn the art of glancing up through her eyelashes, and of blushing prettily at a chance word of praise or a look of admiration. She should be "passionately fond" of love stories, striving to imitate her latest heroines, and sighing like a bellows because her life is cast in so prosaic a mold. She should be disgusted immensely with her mother and brothers who do not sympathize with her "aspirations," and have made out perfectly, in her own mind, the dark-browed, splendidly-dressed gentleman who is to pick her up from the *debris* of an overturned carriage or a railway smash-up. To him she indites love sonnets which mysteriously find their way into the poetical corner of the "Frogtown Banner," and writes imaginary epistles, full of gush-

ing thanks to the same personage, proffering, in return for the life he has saved, her "hithertoo supposed unimpresable hart, now all, all his one"—for, you must know, orthography and prosody are quite beneath the notice of one who has studied "the languages" and sings "heavenly." Her white fingers must be innocent of dishwater and sunburn, (though her pale mother's are hornier than a very Crispin's) and familiar with tatting, crochet and embroidery needle, though the darning in her stocking would drive Catherine Beecher into hopeless convulsions. She must thrum the piano, though her unmusical soul writhes at the torture; and walk, talk, eat, sleep, think and laugh according to established rule.

Now my young lady will none of these. Whatever employment she sees another engaged in, that is she "possessed" to do, until the difficulties are vanquished, when the interest subsides and the work ceases. She does with a right good will—not whatever her hands find to do, for she avers candidly that she "hates work worse than—well, there's any need of" (which is considered a very filial finish up of the sentence, since it might with truth have had, as was evidently intended, quite a different one,) but performs what is required of her to her own and others' satisfac-

tion, and then out into the sunshine, the pure air and the spicy wood's breath. Here it is that restraint is lost, and she is as one who never heard the voice of rebuke.

"O, mother! mother! I wish you would come up here!" floats into my open window in clear, ringing tones, "It's just splendid! Better than the "Notch," or the "Crag," and I can see quite into Bobtown." Turning my eyes in the direction of a hillside orchard, I discover among the topmost branches of the "Golden sweet" a brown head cropped close, a pink face aglow with happy exercise, and dimpled with the light of discovery, and the picture makes me forget the proprieties so far that I send a nod of recognition and sympathy,—the most I could hope to do with all that distance between. But later I say, "Don't you know, Bert, that you were in sight of half the village, and they could hear you plainly, too?" "Could they? Well, the village oughtn't to be listening, and you'd rather I should shout from the tree tops, than be talking scandal in the parlor." There's no use arguing with a person of such odd ideas, and I generally retire from the field after a turn or two.

Then the remarks of friends, often more candid, I must say, than complimentary, are to be

met, and, with true maternal instinct, I seek to defend, however little my heart may be in the work. "You're spoiling Bert, letting her run wild, so," comes in a voice of sisterly admonition, "she's a perfect romp. Look at Julia Sanford and Eva Taylor. The same age or younger, yet they are perfect ladies."

"Perhaps they want to be ladies, (faintly) Bertie dont. She has a terror of stays and long dresses, and hair that can't be brushed up in two jiffs, or anything that goes to make her other than a simple child."

"Yes, and Marier Trot you foster it," puts in privileged Aunt Jane, emboldened by the fact that they are now two to one. "You know you have unbounded influence over her, and if you didn't sanction these wild freaks she'd leave 'em off and try to be somebody."

"I hope she will be somebody, as it is," (a little warmer now,) "you will not deny that she has the foundation of a splendid woman physically, with her five feet eight inches in height, and well proportioned."

"And you glory in that fact? Now Mrs. Peyson thinks if she was in your place she should be terribly mortified at Bertie's size."

Mortified! Well, "every crow's young ones

are the blackest," and if she likes better the looks of her dumpling of a daughter, then two of us, at least, are satisfied. As to the "freaks," they are generally committed without my knowledge, so I fail to see how I sanction them, and as long as they are not very wicked or very outrageous, I cannot find it in my heart to reprimand severely. You know if we rob her of the freedom and joyousness of girlhood, no after years can restore it and nothing can make it up. Then Bert has some traits that should save her from utter condemnation. A more patient, untiring, considerate little nurse never entered a sick room; and for three months last summer such delicate and delicious trays of food as she brought me, all prepared by her own hands, too. I hardly know when she learned, but she knows how to do everything that needs to be done for a family, except washing, and that, I insist, should be undertaken only by stout, full-grown persons. She steps into every vacancy, fills every lack. Does the churning lag in tired hands? Bertie wonders if that dasher ever heard the tune of "Champagne Charlie," and forthwith sets it dancing to that merry music, herself singing—or oftener whistling—her favorite accomplishment. The one want of her life is as yet unsatisfied—a piano for "rainy

days and cold weather," but since a neighbor offered to swap his "Chickering" for her pony, this want seems to have abated wonderfully.

"Swap you away! I want a piano bad, but I want you more," and putting an arm over his glossy neck, leads him off to the stable, where she grooms, saddles, bridles and rides him away, happier in his possession than in the ownership of a dozen pianos or a duchess's wardrobe.

"There she goes again," says Aunt Jane, deprecatingly. "The strangest girl! She don't seem to care the first thing for dress beyond a clean collar and cuffs, and instead of fixing up things to wear, like other girls, buries herself up with a book or a newspaper, or goes romping off out doors. I tell you, Marier, if she is popular with children and old folks, she never'll be with young people till she sobers down a little and becomes like them."

Now I know what Aunt Jane is troubled about. She thinks Bertie will never get a husband. Well, what of it? All women can't marry, and she may as well be one of the single ones as anybody. "Anxious and aimless" she will never be for that reason. Yet I may as well confess that I am not without a certain anxiety in that direction. I cannot stay with her always, and I would leave

her in a pleasant home of her own, amid round-faced, happy-voiced children, herself the center and the sun. Yes, I must undertake the work of toning down. To-morrow I'll begin.

When the morrow came, and the subject of reform was sought, where do you think I found her? Why, with a blanket strapped on Selim's back and she mounted *a la* Napoleon, Gen. Grant or anybody, trotting leisurely round and round the meadow, next the village street and in plain sight of half the people. Descrying me she rode up, and with dancing eyes exclaimed, as she tucked the edge of her skirt over the tip of her gaiter.

"This is the Yosemite, and I'm Anna Dickinson? It's jolly! I don't blame her. The best ride I ever had. If you were only well enough to try it."

What could I say to such audacity and with such a precedent? I knew not whether to laugh or to chide, and she, seizing the moment of doubt, stooped with proffered kisses, which I took and marched straight into the house, muttering, "If she don't out-Dickinson Anna, and out-Anthony Susan, I shall be glad." Yet she is not "strong-minded" in that sense of the word—does not want to vote or monopolize men's employments or amusements.

How then, with her taste for open air exercise, her love of the wild, rollicking games of the lawn—ball, croquet and the like; walking, riding, picnicking, berrying, nutting, each an excuse, and nothing more, for climbing some bold mountain, traversing some endless waste; now a jaunt on a bleak day in March, to the far-away wooded nook where the trailing arbutus first opens its pink petals to the sun, struggling up through its snowy covering—a promise after the winter no less significant or welcome than the bow after the storm—now an excursion to “Pond Island” for the lilies that grow nowhere else, or to “Winter-green Hill”—quite on the verge of civilization—how, I say, with a taste for all this, and a perfect aversion to confinement indoors; to netting, embroidery, hair flowers, woolen pictures and such “nonsense” as she calls it, am I ever to bring her within the pale of gentility—the so-called magic circle of refinement?

Won't somebody tell me what to do with my young lady?

—*Springfield Republican*, 1870.

To C—

Beyond, upon the hillside,
 Blooms a little flower,
Rain nor dew nor sunshine
 Hath, for a single hour,
Reached the dim recesses
 Of its turfy bower.

All winter neath the snow-bank
 The tiny bud lay hid,
But, with the first mild breath of spring
 The petals soft undid,
Unfolding to my vision,
 A soft rose-tinted lid.

Its home is bleak and sterile,
 Its beauties rich and rare ;
Yet gratefully its incense
 Is flung upon the air ;
Nor pines for broader meadows
 Or sunnier gardens fair.

My dear, be like the Arbutus,
 Contented in its zone ;
Your fragrance a pure, loving heart,
 Your grace a gentle tone,
And there may come a happiness
 Akin to Heaven's own.

—*Home Mag.*, 1867.

United after Many Years.

A Peculiar Story Told by an Asylum Superintendent.

“**M**OVE 'long, move right 'long! This ain't no place fer you; only childern's took in here.”

“But I want t' see if they've heerd f'm my boy. Lemme see the superintendent, 'n ask 'im if they know enythin' bouten my boy.”

So the rough-mannered but kind-hearted “blue-coat” granted permission, and the ragged, decrepit creature was allowed to enter the office of an asylum for vagrant, truant and unfortunate children in this city, where, because of poverty and her inability to control him, she had, fifteen years before, placed her only son, a lad of fourteen or thereabouts. Later, her consent had been gained to his being sent to a home in the West, out of reach of the city's temptations, and where he would have a chance to make a man of himself.

But when she told her neighbors what she had done, a great hue and cry was raised, “He'll never be seen ner heerd f'm agin,” they said.

“Mout jes ez well a burrid ’im ’t wunst, n’ dun w’ it.”

And they made her believe it. To these people at that time—indeed, to some at the present time—“the West” was a great, unknown country, into which, if one entered, he was thenceforth lost. It was to them the bourne from which no traveler returns. Then the mother repented her act, but the boy was gone past recall. She thought so, at least. Under the pressure of finding food for herself, and trusting he would never know hunger again, she gradually settled down into a state of hopelessness of ever again knowing aught of his condition.

Years wore on. Years always do wear on, bringing added sorrows and added pains, till even those who are above the struggle for daily bread come to the conclusion that life is not worth the living and ask—sometimes seek—its ending. What the years had been to this old creature words were not needed to tell. The bent and wasted form, the sunken cheeks, the drooping lid, the shrivelled skin, and, more than all, the leathery, distorted hands, with their swollen, knobby joints, revealed the tale. Hard work, hard beds—if any—hunger, scanty clothing;

asleep or awake a cold world, a cold climate—these were her bedfellows.

Finally came sickness, so the poor woman told the superintendent, and she went to live with a sister, only a little less poverty-stricken than herself, save that there was a man in the family, the sister's husband, and they did not actually suffer until he, too, fell ill, and then the wolf stalked in. On her way to the almshouse—she showed her ticket of admission—the trembling old creature explained that she didn't expect ever to leave it, or even to live beyond a few weeks; so she thought she'd come and ask "just once" if anybody ever had heard anything of "her boy."

As the woman told her name, the time of the lad's entrance to the asylum and of his going West, a startled look came into the superintendent's face. He was plainly under some unusual excitement. It was quickly controlled, however, for he saw that here was a case requiring diplomacy. The feeble, shaking, despairing creature sitting before him would never stand any sudden transition, albeit the change was from sorrow to gladness; so he began a journey "round Robin Hood's barn." He told her that they nearly always heard from their boys and girls. The truth is, they always do; agents living in the

neighborhood are employed to look after them, and woe be unto the man or woman who fails to keep the promises made in black and white before any of these, the city's adopted children, are indentured.

"Many of them write to us," he went on, "at longer or shorter intervals; and if one dies, our agent informs us, and it is put on record."

"Did my boy die?" she asked, pitifully.

"Not that we've heard of," was the cheery answer; "but, to show you how some of them get along, I'll read you a letter or two which I have received lately. Here's one that came only this week; listen."

Then he read a letter which, were it permitted, the writer would copy verbatim as an example, first, of the law of the survival of the fittest; second, of the rising, Phoenix-like, of a long-dormant, filial love from the ashes of neglect, separation, and the absorbing purpose, paramount in all ambitious minds, to make a place for one's self in the world.

Of course, the question ere this has presented itself to every reader, as it did to the writer: Why did this mother wait fifteen years before inquiring for her child, and why was it that the same number of years elapsed before a spasm of

resurrected filial love seized and drove him to an effort to find and care for her ?

To particularize a little, however, the young man went on to tell the superintendent that he had stayed out his time with the family where he was placed, had obtained a fairly good education, had been successful in business, had a sweet, loving wife and a darling little daughter, two years old, and added that now only one thing was lacking to complete his happiness ; that was, to find his old mother, and, if living, to bring her to his home and care for her always ; if dead, to have the sad satisfaction of marking her grave. " Can you help me ?" he asked, in closing. The superintendent could help him.

Long before the letter was finished, the old woman's sympathy with that other mother, whose son wanted her so much, had opened the flood-gates. Tears rained down her thin cheeks, and a fragment of her faded apron was brought into requisition. " Did you find her ?" she asked, brokenly, between sobs. " Yes, we've found her," said the superintendent.

" Did she go ?"

" I think she will go," was the answer. " You see, we only got the letter this week. Wouldn't you go if your son sent for you ?"

“Me! I—what!” she faltered.

“I mean—I mean,” stammered the superintendent, “if that letter had been written by your son, don’t you think ’twould be best to gratify him? It isn’t so very far—only to Illinois.”

“Oh, yes,”—slowly—“I’d go to—to any place, if my boy had writ that letter.”

“Well,” parleyed the superintendent, “you haven’t asked me who wrote it; maybe you don’t care to know.”

“Oh, yes, I do,” she answered, sadly, “tho’ I don’t s’pose ’twould make a bit o’ dif’rence.”

The reader must not call her stupid, that she had no suspicion after all this. She had had so much trouble, no wonder her senses were benumbed—that her mind worked slowly. Besides, she never expected anything so good as this could come to her.

To the superintendent the moment had come, and over a lump in his throat he blurted out: “Well, ’twas your boy that wrote the letter, and it’s you we’re going to send to him before the week’s out.” There was the least bit of a chuckle in his voice as he added: “And we had her there by Saturday night, too.”

Afterward he said: “I was in that part of the country a few years later, and went to see them.

The old lady recognized me when half-way across the lawn and came to me. Glad? Well, really, I didn't know, one spell, whether I'd get away whole or in pieces, but certainly I never saw a happier being than she was. Yes, their photos are in that album, but I can't point them out to you or tell you their names. They might not like it, you know."

—*New York Tribune*, 1895.



With a Carding Set.

Tradition says that sharp-edged tools
As gifts, bad omens be.
Sheer nonsense ! things like that mean naught
To either you or me.

This knife was never made to cleave
True hearts in kindness wed,
But junks of turkey, beef, ham, lamb,
Etcetera, instead.

No second-class material this
The " brand " unrivalled stands ;
This fact alone sho'd guarantee
No *cut* in friendship's bands.

Take it and use. And when 'tis mine
To share your evening meal,
Pray let the foeman that it meets
Be worthy of its steel.

Freddie's Feat.

“LET me, Mamma! *Do* let me! I won't fall. I—know—I—won't!” and the great, honest, earnest blue eyes grew larger and darker and bluer in the depths of their pleading as, with one hand pulling hard at his mother's apron, he stood stretching the other towards a point a little way off where, at a glance, might be seen the object of his solicitude.

“It'll die!” he exclaimed, more excitedly, as some new manifestations met his gaze. “Don't you see? it'll die! Quick! Mamma, quick!”

Freddie was not aware of the intensity of that final tug at the apron-string, but it broke, and losing his balance, he reeled almost to falling headlong. At another time he might have stopped to notice the mishap, but now he only made a fresh clutch with both hands amid the ample folds of his mother's skirt, and said in low, trembling tones, as though his infant soul were filled with despair, “Oh! Mamma!”

There was no resisting him now with his brimming eyes, his quivering lips, and the look of deep reproach and sorrow overspreading his features. Indeed, he had not been resisted at all,

but what he asked had, from the first, seemed an impossibility, hence there was hesitation, and that it was which grieved his tender heart.

"I can't, Freddie. *You* can't. It's no use to try. The ladder is too heavy, even if you could climb it when"—

"Come and see, Mamma! Come and see! I can 'most carry it my-own-self," cried the child eagerly, not comprehending the difficulties in the way. Persuaded, but not convinced, Mrs. Finch swung the dismembered apron upon a rose-bush near, and followed her boy to the scene of disaster.

A barn-swallow had, by some inexplicable manœuvering, succeeded in entangling himself in one end of a strong horsehair, the other being securely fastened in the mud-wrought walls of the remarkable nests which these creatures build. The whole colony—several hundred of them, at least—were pitching and diving around the unfortunate bird in the most frantic manner, filling the air with their shrill screams, and almost forming a canopy of their densely plumaged little bodies. How they cut the air in their swift flights, their long wings and forked tails darting in every direction, upward, downward, to the right, the left, sidewise, crosswise, and every

other wise, till the wonder was—and it seemed at times as if this was their intention—that some of them did not dash against and loose from its fastenings the cord by which their companion was bound. But such was not the case, for there he still hung, as adroitly suspended between heaven and earth as was ever human culprit, and with only this difference, that the bird was caught by the leg and swayed to and fro, head downwards.

It appeared at times as though the little prisoner must free himself by his own exertions, for he didn't die "easy." That is, he didn't get discouraged and sink down inanely, without making an effort for his own release. Every little while he sprang wildly into the air, where he fluttered and turned and gyrated with an energy that deserved success; but, alas! it was only to realize anew his helplessness, for he never got beyond the length of the cruel cord that held him. At such times his feathered friends came nearer, as though to encourage or help him, and their whole manner and speech—for it *was* speech, bird language—could easily be interpreted into alternate coaxing and scolding. At last his strength seemed wholly exhausted. The spasmodic efforts ceased, and the poor thing only

swung listlessly to and fro at the end of his halter. Then his friends scattered and went farther away, as if they said " Well, if *you* give up, there's no use in *our* trying. We are very sorry for you, but staying here can do you no good, and we have each our own affairs to see to, and really"—&c., &c. But, of course, they didn't say any such thing, for they were only birds and such thoughts would never enter a bird's head any way.

While we have been explaining, Freddie and his mother had essayed to drag a heavy ladder that stood against a mow in the barn to the outside, and place it in position for their purpose. With much exertion the first part was accomplished, but their united strength failed to raise even one end more than a few feet from the ground, and they stood ruefully contemplating their failure, one of them—it must be confessed, though I need not confess which—half angry that so much time and labor had been spent for naught. She was about to bid this youngest, and just now most troublesome scion of her house, to run for the " fish-pole," when she remembered to have seen an elder, who should have been named Izaak Walton, go trudging off two hours before with that article on his

shoulder, in the direction of the "Trout Brook."

Just then, unluckily, came thoughts of the clear-startching she had dropped at Freddie's first frantic summons, "all the things getting bone dry," and the fire burning out under the irons, which were doubtless at this moment "just right;" and though not by any means a cruel or heartless woman, the claims of the suffering animal were, for the moment, forgotten in those of the prudent housewife, and she said with a lightness she did not quite feel—

"Never mind, Fred. The fellow's got into a scrape; let him get out. There's no way to help him, as I see, and I can't bother any longer."

Again that look of deep reproach gathered in the eyes and over the face of the infant teacher, but he spoke no word. The mother gazed at him an instant, and turned. There was no flinching now, no thought of retreating. Clear-startching nor anything else had power to divert her mind from its purpose; which was to help Freddie out with his plan of rescuing the prisoned bird.

The first thing her searching eye fell upon was a clump of pole-beans, standing a little way out in the garden. Advancing, she wrenched from its place the tallest stake—stripped, with

one fell stroke and without the slightest compunction the tender, clinging vine, with its emerald leaves and great clusters of crimson and white blossoms, that a moment before were swaying and nodding in the summer breeze—and stalked back to where Freddie stood, the look of intense anxiety on his face relieved a little by the gleam of admiration he was beginning to feel for the prowess of his mother.

Now if this were not an “ower true tale” in every particular save the names, I could draw it to a speedy close just here ; but as it is, I am driven to add that the pole, not having been cut with a view to any such emergency as finishing a story or rescuing a bird, was found, even when the mother stood on a chair, to be about a foot too short. The barn was a modern two-story affair, and this it was, perhaps, that made Freddie, who would not for the world have cast any slight on his mother and the means she was so manfully using, to suggest that “the eaves were too high up.” Ah ! Freddie, of how many failures is this the cause ! No fault of ours. We struggle, and try, and reach, but—“things are too high up.”

“Bring me the clothes-pole,” said Mrs. Finch, without descending from her self-erected pedestal, which was tipping and swaying in a manner that

would have been most encouraging at a spiritual seance, but which threatened now something disastrous if two of the chair-legs did not relinquish their attempts at boring Artesian wells in the soft soil. The clothes-pole was brought, and it was doubtless owing to the fact that it came *so near* reaching the desired point that a desperate thrust was made, when, the equilibrium lost, instrument, operator, pedestal and all—save the bird—came tumbling ignominiously earthward.

Freddie turned aghast at this new calamity. With a faint cry he rushed forward, extending both tiny hands to help “poor Mamma” to her footing. But when she laughed, assuring him she wasn’t hurt a bit, he laughed too, and drawing from his pocket a tiny “hankus”—of a most dubious shade, by the way—wiped vigorously her soiled hands and said, comfortingly, “Never mind.”

“Now, Freddie, bring me some light sticks,” said Mamma, undauntedly. Poising herself this time on a pile of loose boards, she aimed carefully at the hateful horse-hair. But David’s mantle (he of the five smooth stones) never fell on this little woman’s shoulders, and the poor bird was in a far greater danger of having its brains

knocked out than it had previously been of—strangulation by the leg.

It was a bad case. A wicked wish crossed the mother's mind to the effect that the creature would die, "and make an end on't," but so far from that being probable, he had just been uttering some very strong protests against the missile mode of treatment, and had succeeded by his flutterings and screamings in calling back most of his old friends and their families, who squeaked and dived around the head of the devoted lady till she was fain to beat a retreat in order to insure her own safety.

Just here Freddie's genius rose triumphant. Throwing up his arms he gave a spring like a frog, crying, "The ladder in the wood-house, Mamma! We never thought! The ladder in"—the rest of the sentence was lost in the distance.

"Sure enough." Who of us, having reached maturity, but sometimes have exhausted all our energies on a problem, to find its solution in the simplest thing imaginable, and then stood silent, more vexed at our own stupidity than we had previously been at all the difficulties that beset us? So now the shorter and lighter ladder from

the woodhouse was soon in place, and Freddie's tiny hand grasping the rung.

"What if you should fall, my son?"

"O, but I shan't," he said, resolutely, and with one eye cocked up at the bird and the other beaming down on Mamma, who held the ladder firmly, but with a face fast bleaching at the thought of danger to her darling, he sung,

"Hitchety hatchet, up I go. Hitchety hatchet, up I go!"

"There," he said, tenderly, but with a shade of triumph in his tone, as he dropped the trembling thing into his bosom, for, owing to the shortness of his legs and the distance between the rungs, two empty hands were essential to a safe descent.

Freddie may live to be a hundred years old, but he will never see a moment of supream happiness than this. He may lead armies to battle, and achieve victories worthy of Alexander himself, (whose namesake he is,) but what is that compared to this bloodless conquest? There would be something left to ask then, be sure; now, the uttermost wish of his heart is satisfied. He may live to count his millions, but they will not have the value to him of the treasure he now holds; for then he will realize that some one else

has more, but now it is not in his mind to conceive that there is in the universe anything of more importance than the feathered midget he holds in his hands. He may attain greatness, have fortunes and favors at his disposal, but he will, by that time, have learned that not "winter's wind nor any other thing" is so unkind as man's ingratitude; that for gifts one sometimes gets kicks, for sacrifices curses, and—hesitate. Now it is with unmixed gladness he watches Mamma's deft fingers untangle the thread from the tiny brown leg, and then, from his own curved palm, sees the little thing soar away to freedom without so much as a chirruped "Thank you."

But, dear me, so far were any of these thoughts and comparisons from their practical minds that Mamma, picking a stray feather from her sleeve, said, smilingly, as she took the chubby face in her hands for a kiss of approval, "Quite a feat, Freddie, for a five-year-old; quite a feat."

And Freddie, casting his eye up the length of the ladder and down again, replied confidently, "Oh! a good many feet, Mamma, I'm sure. A good many feet!"

—*N. Y. Examiner and Chronicle*, 1874.

The State of Voluntown.

One of a Series of "Letters of Travel."

VOLUNTOWN, Ct., September 21.

HENRY C. BOWEN of the *Independent* discourses at a column's length in that paper of Wyndham county; its moral, social, financial, agricultural and political status and prospects, but never once mentions the "State of Voluntown," which lies within its borders and is the capital and chief seaport of New England. The latter fact has been hitherto sadly neglected by geographers; future editions will contain a full and correct statement. Meantime my poor pen shall do what it may towards meting out justice to the place and its people. The principal productions are bayberries, scrub oaks, wild grapes and huckleberries. There are stones here, large stones, small stones and medium sized stones, the latter about the bigness of the Shaker meetin' house. In some cases sites for building are selected near one of these boulders, with an eye to the fine shade which they afford, the protection from adverse winds and the non-necessity of erecting graperies and vine arbors. The roads

are laid out mostly through the forests, because there are fewer stones here than in the open fields. A ride over them is a cure for dyspepsia. Coe need not advertise in this region. But though you are shaken to the very nails in your shoes, there is compensation even here. The fragrant sweet fern borders every wayside, the whole air is mellifluous with the notes of bird and insect, and morning and evening the pathetic plaint of the whip-poor-will is heard, just as it has been through all time. It is said that whatever you may happen to be doing when the cry of the whip-poor-will first falls on your ear, that you will continue to do all the rest of the year. I hope not, for I was clinging to a buggy with the right wheel riding a high rock, the left scraping its base. I may have forgotten to mention that it is a stony country.

For all that there are some really fine fields and excellent farms here, although one cannot but regard them as literal oases, considering their rough and rugged surroundings. I am told that when an attempt is made at clearing, a valley with a surface of solid granite is chosen; into this are rolled rocks, boulders and stones promiscuously until nearly full, when the tops of the surrounding hills are scraped in and the work is complete.

To some this may seem like hyperbole, but I believe it. So I do this anecdote, for it is well authenticated: In a tavern, fifty years ago, and as many miles away, a dispute arose between two individuals as to the probable worth, in a money point of view, of a prominent citizen of the place. Words ran high, when the gentleman himself unexpectedly walked in and the appeal direct was made: "How much land are you owner of, Cap'n?" "Seven hundred acres, more or less," was the reply. "I give it up," said the vanquished party; "you're a poorer man than I thought you was, if you have to pay taxes on seven hundred acres of Voluntown land."

It may not be generally known that the seaserpent whose sinuous length disturbed the placid waters of Silver Lake a few years ago—he has lately turned up in Salt Lake or thereabouts—gambled away his babyhood in the woods of Voluntown. Irony aside, I suppose there is no doubt that a monster snake lived and flourished here in the beginning of the century. He is described by those who saw him, and they are persons whose veracity you would not doubt on any other subject, as being as large round as a medium sized person, and "as long as a long rail," if any body knows how long that is. To men, women

and children he came, they saw and he conquered for they fled incontinently. It came to pass that the latter would not go far from their homes, and the former, though not afraid, of course not! went in company oftener than was really convenient. It is related that a man whose children were sick went one evening after a neighboring woman, waited for her to make ready, and started homeward. They were on separate horses, and as the case was urgent went at a round pace. It was not slackened when on reaching "the woods," his snakeship took up the line of march on the woman's side, and kept it to the end, offering them no molestation. They say his head was about the size of a yearling calf's, and when moving was on a level with their horses, with eyes glittering and darting as snake's eyes always are. A pleasant companion truly. Now if there had been only one person, this tale might be attributed to the combined action of fear and a creative imagination; as it is,—what! Won't somebody come to the rescue? One thing is certain, if you want to express the opinion with an averted head, that "it will *do* for a snake story," you wo'd better wait till you are at a considerable distance from the narrators and corroborators, or have a safe place of retreat near at hand. Another

statement is that a young woman not having the fear of the serpent before her eyes, for this was among his first visitations, went out berrying, carrying with her her sister's little child. Hearing a great noise, "like the tramp and jar of young cattle on the ground," she looked up to see the monster passing, having come from the direction of the child. She threw away pail and berries, and seizing the little one, ran to the house, where she fainted dead away. More might be told but I forbear.

Despite all this, Voluntown has many good and redeeming qualities. If its soil is composed largely of granite, so likewise are its sons, and it is no mean material to mix in with the soft and slaty slabs that go to make up the great social and political structure of to day. They fill with honor the highest offices of church and State. Here and there all over the country men of note—lawyers, doctors, ministers, editors, and teachers, not to speak of the numbers who tread worthily the humbler walks—date proudly back their own or their parents' birth to this rugged spot. Galusha A. Grow of Pennsylvania spent his childhood and youth, if he had not his birth-place, here, of which I am not sure. It is said of the boy that he was sociable, frank and fearless, but

carried about him no signs of the man's greatness. His mother had a premonition, however. Happening on a fortune-teller one time in a spirit of fun she conspired with her mates to mislead the old crone into the belief that she was an unmarried lady. When her turn came an inquiry from one of the party was met with. "Her beau! her beau is her husband, and she has children, too. And madam," she continued impressively, "the child who will be born to you within the year will have a great fortune—achieve a great name." The mother's heart beat high in the hope that one who would not be deceived in regard to present facts might not be as to future ones. And her hope was realized. I know a bright little fellow "up among the mountains," now in his first decade, of whom the same prophetic words were spoken and under similar circumstances, only that they were whispered in the father's ear. May they have as literal a fulfillment.

Notwithstanding the number of self-exiles there are still eminent men left in Voluntown, enough to leaven the lump. One of the brightest intelligences, I record it sorrowfully, has lately been dimmed, not by death, but by paralysis. The loss, if permanent, is irreparable to family, profession and society. What sadder sight can there

be than a leader, strong, brave, true and kind, brought down while in full bodily health to the mental conditions of an infant. None, except the mind ruined by strong drink.

Having spoken of the sons, the daughters must not be forgotten. There are few left. Somehow they are transplanted early to foreign homes, some to costly and luxurious homes, others perhaps to squalid and wretched ones. Each, I am sure, will act well her part, not forgetting that though all the honor does not lie there, as this world's opinion goes, there is yet another and a higher opinion to be given. Certain it is that as the children of Israel went back longingly to the leeks and onions of Egypt, so turn these children back with hungry eyes and hearts to the ragged rocks, each to their childish fancy a castle of the olden romance; to the basin-like valleys where the sunshine settled thicker than in any spot known on the wide earth since, and to tiny ponds and rivers that mirrored happier faces than childhood will ever wear again. "Those halcyon days," they exclaim. It speaks well for them, this attachment to their early, humble home, although, under circumstances, the extravagance of expression does sometimes strike one as ludicrous. I was listening to a peroration of this sort, not long since,

when the husband looked up with a merry twinkle in his eye, and, "Do you know my wife thinks if she's good she'll go to Voluntown when she dies?" That throws the hope of the Bostonians quite into the shade.

—*Springfield Republican*, 1868.



An Interpolation.

To Will Carleton's Famous Poem.

About the year '82 Julia Ward Howe, the honored, Lucy Stone, the lamented, and their co-workers moved heaven and earth to secure a change of laws in the old Bay State relative to "widow's rights" in property. They succeeded, and a Massachusetts woman cannot now be made a pauper from the moment of her husband's death—unless she was virtually one before; in other words, she may keep for her own use the property she has helped to save and earn, instead of seeing it pass into the hands of those who have a legal but no moral claim to it. The "one-third" law, however, more's the pity, still obtains in many of the states.

It was impossible to be within the radius of their personality and not become imbued with the spirit of these women, and, one day, in an excess of enthusiasm, I had the temerity to weave the popular sentiment into a few stanzas and put them into that favorite poem of Will Carleton's "Over the Hill to the Poor-house." Sitting by Mrs. Stone's desk, I laid them before her. She was delighted and would have printed them in the *Woman's Journal*, but I demurred. Wherever they have been given, however, there have been so many requests for copies that lately I was led to ask Mr. Carleton's permission to publish them in connection with the poem. This he readily gives, and from his great, kindly heart adds: "They are certainly well conceived and written, and, I think, might do a great deal of good, particularly in the states where the criticism applies." With that hope I send them forth. They are the 12th, 13th and 14th stanzas of the ballad as reprinted.

Over the Hill to the Poor-house.

Over the hill to the poorhouse I'm trudgin' my weary
I, a woman of seventy, and only a trifle gray— [way—
I, who am smart an' chipper, for all the years I've told,
As many another woman, that's only half as old.

[clear !

Over the hill to the poorhouse—I can't quite make it
Over the hill to the poorhouse—it seems so horrid queer !
Many a step I've taken, a-toilin' to an' fro,
But this is a sort of journey I never thought to go.

What is the use of heapin' on me a pauper's shame ?
Am I lazy or crazy ? am I blind or lame ?
True, I ain't so supple, nor yet so awful stout,
But charity ain't no favor, if one can live without.

I'm willin' an' anxious an' ready any day,
To work for a decent livin' an' pay my honest way ;
For I can earn my victuals, an' more too, I'll be bound,
If anybody only is willin' to have me round.

Once I was young an' han'some—I was, upon my soul—
Once my cheeks was roses, my eyes as black as coal ;
And I can't remember, in them days, of hearin' people
For any kind o' reason, that I was in the way. [say,

'Taint no use of boastin' or talkin' over free,
But many a house an' home was open then to me :
An' many a han'some offer I had from likely men,
And nobody ever hinted that I was a burden then.

[smart,

And when to John I was married, sure he was good and
But he and all the neighbors would say I done my part :
For life was all before me, an' I was young an' strong,
And I did the best I could in tryin' to get along.

And so we worked together ; life was hard but gay,
With now and then a baby to cheer us on the way ;
Till we had half a dozen, an' all kept clean an' neat,
An', went to school like others, an' had enough to eat.

So we worked for the childr'n, and raised 'em every one :
Worked for 'em summer and winter, just as we ought
to've done ;

Only perhaps we humored 'em, which some good folks
condemn,

But every couple's childr'n's a heap the best to them.

Strange how much we think of our blessed little ones!—
I'd have died for my daughters, I'd have died for my sons;
And God, he made that law o' love; but when we're old
and gray,

I've noticed sometimes somehow it don't work t'other way.

[grown,
Strange, another thing; when our boys an' girls was
And all, exceptin' Charlie, had left us there alone; [to be,
When John he nearer an' nearer come, an' dearer seem'd
The Lord o' hosts he come one day, an, took him away
[from me.

We'd just cleared the place o' mortgage, an' 'twould
supported me right through

If John had only made a will as he allus meant to do;
But when the estate was settled by an ex-ex—well, some
high soundin' name,
The int'rest o' one-third, they said, was all that I co'd
[claim.

So the children took possession o' what they'd never
earned,

An' I, it's rightful owner, was on their bounty turned,
Queer now! If I'd a died an' John been left to mourn
They couldn't 'a' touched a dollar not the old shoes I had
[worn.

I never was "strong minded"—never cared to vote,
But such a law as that sho'd be crammed down the
maker's throat,

Just think! when death has robbed us of our comfort and
our stay,

The law steps in an' kindly takes our property away!

Still I was bound to struggle, an' never to shrink or fall
Still I worked for Charlie, for Charlie was now my all;

And Charlie was pretty good to me, with scarce a word or frown,

Till at last he went a-courtin' and brought a wife from
[town.

She was somewhat dressy, an' hadn't a pleasant smile;
She was quite conceity too and put on a heap o' style;
But if ever I tried to be friends, I did with her, I know;
But she was hard and proud, an' I could'nt make it go.

She had an edication, an' that was good for her; [fur;
But when she twitted me o' mine, 'twas carryin' things too
An' I told her once 'fore company (an' it almost made her
sick),

That I never swallowed a grammar nor et a 'rethmetic.

So 'twas only a few days before the thing was done—
They was a family by themselves, and I another one;
And while a very little cottage for one family will do,
I never yet have seen a house that was big enough for two.

I never could speak to suit her, never could please her eye
An' it made me independent, an' then I didn't try;
But I was terribly staggered, an' felt it like a blow,
When Charlie turned ag'in me, an' told me I could go.

I went to live with Susan, but Susan's house was small,
And she was always hintin' how snug 'twas for us all;
And what with her husband's sisters, and what with her
childr'n three,

'Twas easy to discover there wasn't room for me.

Then I went to live with Thomas, he's the oldest son I've got,
For Thomas' buildings'd cover the half of an acre lot;
But the childr'n all was on me—I could'nt stand their
sauce—

And Thomas told me I need'nt think I was coming there
[to boss.

Then I wrote to Rebecca, my girl who lives out West,
And to Isaac, not fur from her—some twenty miles at best;
And one of 'em said 'twas too warm there for any one so
And t'other had an opinion the climate was too cold. [old,

An' so they have shirked and slighted me, an' shifted me
about— [out ;

Till they have well nigh soured me, an' wore my old heart
But still I've kept up pretty well, an' wasn't much put
down,

Till Charlie went to the poor-master, an' put me on the
town.

Over the hill to the poor-house—my childr'n dear, good-
by ! [nigh ;

Many a night I've watched by you when only God was
And He will judge between us ; but I will al'ays pray
That you may never suffer the half I do to-day.



